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ABSTRACT

This two-part report focuses on progress made by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) during the first year of a 5-year contract. AEL's mandate is to work with educators in ongoing research and development-based efforts to improve education and educational opportunities in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Part I: "Overview of the AEL Regional Educational Laboratory--FY 91" contains two sections. Section A focuses on perspectives from a governance and management point of view. Section B summarizes the goals, work, and accomplishments of eight lab programs. In Part II, "Fourth Quarter FY 91 Report of Laboratory Performance," six AEL tasks are discussed: (1) development of effective governance, management, and planning systems; (2) assisting efforts to improve educational outcomes, especially for at-risk students; (3) conducting applied research and development; (4) collaboration with other agencies; (5) conducting evaluation; and (6) improving linkages between early childhood education and early elementary school. Three appendices provide: a graphic display of AEL staff contacts with clients for FY 91; Fourth Quarter Program Advisory Committee Meeting Summaries; and AEL's certification that 25 percent of expenditures for this contract year were utilized for the Improvement of small, rural schools. An "Interim Report of the FY 91 External Evaluation of AEL" is attached. The report, which consists of a case study of the Cabell County, West Virginia public school district, was written for the AEL by Michael C. Reed and William Wiersma of the Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University. (LL)

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The Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL), Inc., works with educators in ongoing R & D-based efforts to improve education and educational opportunity. AEL serves as the Regional Educational Laboratory for Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. It also operates the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. AEL works to improve:

- professional quality,
- curriculum and instruction,
- community support, and
- opportunity for access to quality education by all children.

Information about AEL projects, programs, and services is available by writing or calling AEL, Post Office Box 1348, Charleston, West Virginia 25325; 800/624-9120 (outside WV), 800/344-6646 (in WV), and 347-0400 (local); 304/347-0487 (FAX number).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AEL's Regional Educational Laboratory proposal for 1991-95 presented its basic plans for assisting with school improvement efforts in its four-state Region of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. AEL proposed to continue with the basic approaches initiated in the 1986-90 period, but with fine-tuning adjustments to those approaches. For example, the ongoing central involvement of AEL's Board members is continued, but formalized more through in-state meetings held in conjunction with the quarterly Board meetings. Similarly, an array of general and specialized service strategies was continued and refined for informing the Region's education stakeholders about, and access to, innovative materials and procedures regarding school improvement--the redesigned quarterly newsletter, The Link, is one example. Also, AEL's programs are continuing to use techniques such as study groups, training-for-trainers, and educational technology while refining how these mechanisms are planned and delivered.

This executive summary focuses first on an institutional-level look at FY 91 accomplishments and second on brief highlights of the Lab's substantive programs.

In the area of AEL governance, the Board of Directors held four regular quarterly meetings in 1991. These Board meetings were held in Charleston, WV, in January; in Frankfort, KY, in April; in Williamsburg, VA, in July; and in Nashville, TN, in October.

Other Board member groups met and conducted business during the quarterly meetings. The Board's Executive Committee members reviewed all Board agenda items and developed recommendations relevant to some items. Additionally, the Executive Committee held one special meeting in Charleston, WV, in March to interview for and select staff for two new AEL positions. The AEL Future Committee of the Board met each quarter and explored new ways by which AEL might pursue its mission. The AEL Future Committee recommended, and the full Board subsequently approved, three major items in 1991: (1) the membership of selected program advisory committees was expanded to 6-8 Board members, (2) the organizational management of AEL was restructured, and (3) specific corporate goals will be established annually.

The seven (plus one alternate) people who represent each state on AEL's Board of Directors are called State Caucuses. The role of the State Caucuses was expanded in FY 91 to involve them more formally in the fact-finding process relative to the state education reform efforts and AEL's needs sensing role. Starting with the April 1991 Board meeting, the host state Caucus met in presessions to the regular quarterly meeting (a) to receive inputs on state education reform from a variety of state leaders in a special half-day session and (b) to discuss and deliberate on how what they heard might impact on the work of AEL's programs.

Also, in governance, AEL proposed to change its corporate bylaws to require that all at-large representatives on the Board be noneducators. In 1991, the Board did revise its corporate bylaws to effect this change and, thus, AEL's Board will soon achieve the 50-percent educators/ 50-percent noneducator balance.

In the area of management and operations, the AEL Board enacted a significant restructuring of AEL's corporate management in 1991. Highlights of this restructuring include: (a) placing all programmatic operations under the direct supervision of the deputy executive director, (b) creating a new central administrative position of associate executive director with attendant duties, (c) dividing responsibility for Information Services program management, (d) placing the State Policy program under the direct management of the executive director, and (e) placing the Classroom Instruction and Colleges and Schools programs under a single program director.

For the 1986-90 contract period, the AEL Management Team served as the one general forum for the whole array of program, contract, personnel, and other matters as the Lab reorganized itself. With that exploratory period completed, more specialized groups for staff communications and decisionmaking were formed. The four new AEL management groups implemented in 1991 included: (1) central management group, (2) REL management group, (3) communications group, and (4) rural interests group.

AEL operated with a mission statement and four overarching goals to provide direction for its work in the Region in prior contracts. For the 1991-95 contract, AEL's goals were expanded by defining three new levels. Five new instrumental goals were added to make explicit the basic strategies that underlie AEL's approach to serving as a Regional Lab. Three new performance goals were added to define the Lab's performance as a service provider. The three performance goals are directed toward providing its educators (and others) awareness of, access to, and experience with actual resources for improving education. Measuring AEL's annual achievement on the three performance goals serves as the basis for the Lab's annual goals. Baseline data were to be collected in FY 91. However, work on operationalizing the data systems necessary to establish the baseline were delayed in FY 91 and the systems will be operationalized in FY 92.

In the FY 91-95 contract period, AEL proposed a bold new approach to needs assessment and planning that departed from past efforts. AEL proposed the development of an environmental scanning system that informs Lab planning and the development of a new structure--the state planning meeting. AEL staff developed and installed the new environmental scanning system--called News-Scan--in 1991. The News-Scan database consists of all the education-related articles published in the largest circulation newspapers in each of the Lab's states--2,694 articles in 1991. The News-Scan database consists of both user-friendly computer form and in clipped and mounted hard copy files. AEL staff designed, planned, produced, and evaluated four quarterly issues of the News-Scan Bulletin, a new quarterly publication based on a synthesis of the News-Scan database.

AEL's evaluation design for FY 91-95 includes five areas: (1) formative and summative evaluation, (2) AEL impact studies, (3) external evaluation of AEL work, (4) quality assurance, and (5) cross-Laboratory evaluation.

AEL operated eight substantive programs in 1991--brief highlights of each will be discussed in turn.

The Classroom Instruction (CI) program worked most closely with classroom teachers in the Region and collaborated with the four state teacher educator associations. Four issues of the program's "Focus on Instruction" insert to The Link were produced in 1991. A total of 38 teachers and other educators in the Region wrote original articles for the 4-8 page insert, after solicitation by the advisory committee members. Readership for the insert increased by 30 percent in 1991 to 1,472 persons.

The majority of School Governance and Administration (SGA) staff time in 1991 was devoted to the many aspects of the field test of the QUILT Staff Development Program (QUILT is the acronym for Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking). QUILT is a year-long professional development experience for teachers consisting of three major components: (a) induction training, (b) collegiums, and (c) practicums. The QUILT field test involved 13 school districts, 41 schools, and 1,200 teachers in 1991.

The Colleges and Schools program worked most closely with the four states' Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (ACTE) affiliates to support and involve their members' faculty in collaborative projects with local schools. AEL Minigrants are modest grants made to teacher educators, working in collaboration with one or more local schools or school systems to improve: teacher preparation, inservice teacher training, and/or school performance. In 1991, a total of 1,094 Minigrant announcements/cover sheets was mailed in the Region, resulting in 29 applications in the spring round of competition and 52 applications in the fall competition.

The State Policy (SP) program worked most closely with the four Chief State School Officers (CSSOs) to serve the needs of state policymakers. Two in-state policy seminars were coordinated by SP staff in 1991, one in the spring and one in August. In addition to Task 2 work, the SP program operated a Task 3 project, Study of State Policy Effects on Rural School Districts. A major part of staff work on this project in FY 91 was gaining entree to the school districts.

The Community Liaison to Urban Education (CLUE) program worked with and served the needs of the Region's minority and nonadvantaged populations. CLUE staff convened numerous meetings of parents, community leaders, and external community leaders and also made formal presentations on strategies for building networks and partnerships during 1991. In the area of dissemination of information, CLUE staff produced and distributed approximately 19,300 pieces of general information throughout the Region in 1991.

The Rural, Small Schools (RSS) program worked with and served the needs of rural students and educators in 1991. The RSS program conducted three Task 2 activities and one Task 3 activity in FY 91. Regarding the Task 2 activities, RSS staff convened several meetings and led discussions with representatives of four institutions of higher education relative to the establishment of technology-oriented library networks: three institutions in West Virginia and one in Tennessee. Regarding the Task 3 activity, RSS staff spent the year investigating the feasibility of conducting a full scale research study on closing and consolidating rural and small schools.

The Information Services (IS) program worked with and served the needs of both the Region's educators and AEL staff for information about and access to innovative practices and materials. In 1991, the IS Resource Center filled 1,110 requests for information resulting in the dissemination of 4,791 documents. Also, 530 information search requests were completed.

Two different R & D projects were begun in the Rural Excel (RE) program in 1991. The goal of the first project is to test a set of mathematics activities manuals in grades five through eight. The goal of the second RE project is to develop and test several sets of innovative materials, including videotapes, to increase teacher-families and families-young children communications and developmentally appropriate learning activities.

REPORT SUMMARY

This is a report of the progress made by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) on Contract #RP91002002 during FY 91, the first year of the five-year contract (1991-95).

This report contains detailed discussions of the Lab's work organized by the six tasks established by OERI for 1991-95 (see the Table of Contents). AEL's eight programs carry out work pursuant to these six tasks. During FY 91, one program operated solely a Task 3 R & D project; two other programs operated Task 3 R & D projects in addition to Task 2 work; and one program performed work relevant to Tasks 1 (Needs Assessment and Planning component), 2, 4, 5, and 6.

Information in this report is provided in two main parts: Part I: Overview of the AEL Regional Educational Laboratory--FY 91; and Part II: Fourth Quarter FY 91 Report of Laboratory Performance.

Part I: Overview of the AEL Regional Educational Laboratory--FY 91 contains descriptions of program and project work in two sections: Section A: What We Set Out to do as a Lab in FY 91 and What We Accomplished; and Section B: Summary of AEL Program Goals and Accomplishments in FY 91. Part I provides a systematic summary of the Regional Educational Laboratory's intended and actual outcomes at two different levels. Section A deals with institution-level matters and focuses primarily on organizational concerns relevant to Laboratory governance and management and to a lesser degree on matters of project operation. Section B deals with project-level matters and focuses most heavily on concerns relevant to project operation and only minimally on matters of governance and management. Program directors provided copy on their program's rationale, key procedures employed, and major accomplishments by type or activity.

Part II: Fourth Quarter FY 91 Report of Laboratory Performance contains descriptions of program and project work within the six task sections for the fourth quarter of FY 91. Directors had the option of using full paragraphs or bulleted sentences to report their work. Preceding these descriptions are Success Stories, succinct vignettes about noteworthy impacts of the Lab's programs.

Following Part II are three appendices. Appendix A, FY 91 AEL Contacts With Clients, provides a graphic display of AEL staff contacts for FY 91. Appendix B, Fourth Quarter Program Advisory Committee Meeting Summaries, provides the minutes of the fourth quarterly meeting. Appendix C, AEL's certification of rural expenditures, responds to a request from OERI to include in this report a certification that at least 25 percent of AEL's Regional Educational Laboratory expenditures for this contract year were for the improvement of small, rural schools.

Attached to the FY 91 Annual Report is the Interim Report of the FY 91 External Evaluation of AEL by Western Michigan University.

PART I: OVERVIEW OF THE AEL REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY--FY 91

SECTION A: WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO AS A LAB IN FY 91 AND WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED

Background

AEL's Regional Educational Laboratory proposal for 1991-95 calls for continuation of the basic approaches initiated in 1986-90 for assisting with school improvement in the four-state Region: Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. For 1991-95, AEL proposed to implement some changes from prior years, but these changes are of a fine-tuning nature. For example, the ongoing central involvement of AEL's Board members in needs assessment is continued, but more formalized annual in-state meetings have been added to assure Board members the broadest possible perspective on education reform in their own states. Similarly, AEL's operating programs are continuing to use techniques such as study groups and training-for-trainers while refining how these mechanisms are used.

This overview section of AEL's FY 91 annual report focuses on Labwide perspectives primarily from a governance and management point of view. Following this institutional-level description, a section is provided in which the work and accomplishments of AEL's substantive programs are summarized.

Governance

AEL's Board of Directors held four regular quarterly meetings in 1991. These meetings were held:

- in Charleston, WV, on January 18-19;
- in Frankfort, KY, on April 20-21;
- in Williamsburg, VA, on July 30-31; and
- in Nashville, TN, on October 19-20.

In conjunction with these regular meetings, other Board member groups were convened.

Executive Committee

The Board's Executive Committee, made up of the Board's four officers, met in conjunction with each regular Board meeting. In these meetings, Executive Committee members reviewed all Board agenda items and developed recommendations relevant to some items. Such recommendations were then presented to the Board at its quarterly business session, which was the final event at each quarterly meeting. During 1991, one special meeting of the Executive Committee was held in Charleston, WV, on March 6-7. At this special session, Executive Committee members interviewed staff members who had applied for either of two positions (Rural Excel program director and AEL associate executive director) and selected persons for these new positions.

AEL Future Committee

Membership on this committee consists of the four corporate officers and one additional representative from each state. The AEL Future Committee is charged with exploring possible new ways by which AEL might better pursue achievement of its mission. Plans of the AEL Future Committee in this regard were submitted to the AEL Board of Directors for consideration at each of the Board's quarterly business sessions. Results of recommendations brought by this committee include:

- the membership of selected program advisory committees was expanded to 6-8 Board members,
- the organizational management of AEL was restructured, and
- specific corporate goals will now be established annually.

All of the important corporate development adjustments recommended by the AEL Future Committee and approved by the AEL Board have been detailed in special communications with OERI officials and described in AEL's regular quarterly reports to the government.

State Caucus Meetings

The seven (plus one alternate) people who represent each state on AEL's Board of Directors are called State Caucuses. These groups have long provided an integral part of the Board's state-specific information gathering and discussion. In 1991, the state education reform and needs-sensing role of these groups was expanded through establishment of a more formalized fact-finding process. Beginning with the April 1991 Board meeting, each of the Board's State Caucuses met in a presession to the regular quarterly meeting held in their states (a) to receive inputs on state education reform from a wide array of state leaders invited to a half-day session scheduled for this purpose, and (b) to deliberate on how what they had heard might impact the work of AEL's programs.

Board Membership Balanced

To meet OERI's requirement that educators (excluding Chief State School Officers) not exceed 50 percent of the Lab's Board membership, AEL proposed to change its corporate bylaws to require that all at-large representatives be noneducators. It was further proposed that the actual change be phased in as the current three-year terms of at-large representatives expire. These conditions were accepted by OERI. In response, the AEL Board revised its bylaw on at-large representation on the Board:

> Directors-at-large: Each state will have three (3) directors-at-large who shall serve on the Board of Directors. Educators shall not be eligible to serve as directors-at-large. Recommendations for persons to fill such positions may be made by the membership of each state to their respective State Caucus. Each State Caucus shall be responsible for determining the name of one qualified person from its state for each vacant director-at-large position. The State Caucus will then forward to the Nominating Committee, at the time of the third regular meeting, such person's name, address, and qualifications as their recommendation.

As agreed, therefore, AEL's Board will soon achieve the 50-percent educator/50-percent noneducator balance.

Management and Operations

As noted under Governance (above), the AEL Board has enacted a restructuring of AEL's overall corporate management. Highlights of this restructuring include:

- placing all programmatic operations of AEL under the direct supervision of the deputy executive director;
- creating a new central administrative position--associate executive director--to head AEL communications, development, and related operations, including product quality assurance;
- dividing responsibility for the Information Services program's management between the deputy and the associate executive directors;
- placing the State Policy program under the direct management of the executive director as principal investigator; and
- placing the Classroom Instruction and the Colleges and Schools programs under a single program director.

This significant realignment of AEL's corporate management structure has been evolving through various stages of planning since 1986, when the Lab's program structure was radically revised. Based on the experience of the 1986-90 Lab operation, final plans for corporate restructuring were developed by the AEL Future Committee and approved by the Board of Directors in a three-stage process that began in January and was concluded in July 1991.

While these management realignments are significant, they are not expected to impact greatly the day-to-day operations of the work being conducted under the Regional Educational Laboratory contract. The corporate restructuring is envisioned, instead, as a mechanism for (a) maintaining the high quality of operations supported by the Regional Lab contract and (b) developing the corporation's capacity to assist its member states in obtaining the new support that may be required to carry out their high-priority reform efforts. In other words, the purpose of management restructuring was primarily undertaken to strengthen AEL's corporate ability to provide "value-added" contributions to its work as a Regional Educational Laboratory.

Management Groups

Formal groups established for top-level staff communications were held to a minimum during 1986-90 for much the same reason that specialization was eschewed for key administrator roles. In this period, the Management Team served as a general forum in which a whole array of program, contract, personnel, and other matters were considered in detail and acted upon. This generalized approach seemed necessary as we charted unexplored territory for an R & D organization. With that exploratory period behind us, the efficiency of more specialized groups for staff communications and decisionmaking seems appropriate. The groups include (1) central management, (2) Regional Educational Laboratory management, (3) communications, and (4) rural interests. The membership and purposes of these more specialized groups are described in the paragraphs that follow.

Central management group. Designed to ensure the highest possible levels of communication, advice, and decisionmaking within the central administration, this group will involve almost daily meetings of the executive director, the deputy executive director, and the associate executive director, and a regular schedule of meetings where the business and personnel managers also are involved.

REL management group. Designed to ensure the highest possible levels of communication, advice, and decisionmaking regarding the Regional Educational Laboratory program operation, this group will involve regular meetings of Regional Educational Laboratory program and project directors with the deputy executive director.

Communications group. Designed to ensure the highest possible levels of communication, advice, and decisionmaking concerning communications with the Region and nationally, this group will involve regular meetings with the associate executive director to problem solve and provide program-level input to the AEL communications program. The group will be composed of one representative from each major operating program.

Rural group. Designed to ensure the highest possible levels of communication about and coordination of all rural efforts, all such assigned Level III and Level IV exempt staff (and others that may be selected by program directors) will meet regularly.

Personnel and Business Management

The basic structures for personnel and business management continue:

- a Personnel Office under the direction of Personnel Manager Mary Farley maintains all official personnel records and oversees all personnel actions, as does the parttime affirmative action officer; and

- a Business Office under the direction of Business Manager Jane Copley maintains all fiscal and contractual records, as well as monitoring contract compliance, management of all supplies and equipment (including computers), and preparing all fiscal and contractual reports required of the corporation.

As new requirements (such as the federal audit regulations imposed by OMB circular A-133) are confronted, the responsibilities of these basic corporate units naturally increase. However, except for stating the expectation that a major review of personnel and fiscal policies will be undertaken, the restructuring had only nominal direct impact on AEL's personnel and business management operations.

Staff Development

Many professional development opportunities are available to AEL staff, primarily through the corporation's education benefits policies. These policies provide three basically different routes for personal/professional development:

- Required training. When it is in the interest of the Laboratory that an employee be requested to receive specialized training, all reasonable costs of such training are paid by the Laboratory. Such required training is provided to employees only when the prospective work of a specially trained employee will be more cost effective than use of consultative services.

- Formal educational advancement. Employees of AEL have equal access to limited Laboratory support for the voluntary advancement of their formal education. Such support is provided when an employee develops a plan for personal educational advancement and follows this plan. Each year, funds are set aside to provide for tuition reimbursement that may be requested by employees under this program. Work schedule modifications are also permitted, allowing the adjustment of work schedules and release time with pay so that employees can pursue further education.

- Informal educational opportunities. Plans for Laboratory sponsorship of informal events, such as in-house conferences, workshops, seminars, lectures, and "brown-bag" luncheon discussions, are included in the Lab's informal educational opportunities. Staff are encouraged to recommend new ideas for achieving needed staff development.

Staff members have taken advantage of all these professional development opportunities during 1991. Several individuals have been sponsored to participate in training that will enhance their job performance. Six staff members have taken advantage of formal educational advancement to obtain tuition reimbursement and other benefits this year. Only a limited number of in-house educational opportunities was offered in 1991, but staff members were sponsored for participation in many events, ranging from a one-day workshop on proofreading to national meetings and conferences of specific professional relevance. Also, plans are underway for offering all staff the opportunity to participate in a series of leadership training experiences that were developed originally for Virginia school administrators by the state LEAD program and AEL's School Governance and Administration program. Members of the Regional Educational Laboratory program directors' group have indicated their interest in expanding such professional development efforts.

The Lab's Mission and Goals for FY 91

Under prior Regional Lab contracts, AEL has operated with only a mission statement and overarching goals to provide overall direction for its work in the Region. Further specifications of the purpose were dependent on the objectives specified for the individual programs. For 1991-95, the Lab's goals were expanded by defining three additional levels: instrumental goals, performance goals, and annual goals.

The following paragraphs outline the five-level mission/goals structure that now directs AEL's work as a Regional Lab.

Operational Goals for 1991-95

For 1991-95, the Laboratory's mission and overarching goals are to be operationalized by establishing two additional levels of goals. These new levels of goal definition are (1) instrumental goals and (2) performance goals.

Instrumental goals. Instrumental goals make explicit the basic strategies that underlie AEL's approach to serving as a Regional Lab. AEL has adopted the following instrumental goals.

- Instrumental Goal #1: To regularly assess the educational needs of the Appalachian Region and report findings to the AEL Board and to the Region's educational leaders.

- Instrumental Goal #2: To establish and maintain procedures for monitoring both regional and national sources for the purpose of identifying innovative practices and materials relevant to improving (a) professional quality, (b) curriculum and instruction, (c) community support, and (d) equity of access for appropriate education.

- Instrumental Goal #3: To develop a limited number of materials and procedures designed to meet specific educational needs of the Region that are not satisfied by existing materials and procedures.

- Instrumental Goal #4: To assess the impact of selected educational materials and procedures in terms of educator behavior and/or student performance as these materials and procedures are used in a limited number of sites in the Region.

- Instrumental Goal #5: To provide educators of the Appalachian Region information about and access to innovative practices and materials relevant to improving (a) professional quality, (b) curriculum and instruction, (c) community support, and (d) equity of access to appropriate education.

These instrumental goals explicate a set of basic operations that AEL will undertake as a means of serving the Appalachian Region.

Performance goals. It is not possible for a Regional Educational Laboratory to work directly with all the educators of its Region. Therefore, many Regional Lab activities are directed toward reaching the largest possible audience of educators in the Region (a) to inform them of innovative resources (materials and/or procedures) available, (b) to provide them access to detailed information about such new resources (or access to the resources themselves), and (c) to provide them an experience in the process of actually integrating the knowledge of science and practice as the strategy for meeting a particular educational need. These tasks define the primary service functions of a Regional Educational Laboratory. Activities that are directed toward providing its Region's educators (and others involved in education) awareness of, access to, and experience with the actual resources for improving education, in large measure, define the Laboratory's performance as a service provider. Therefore, AEL adopted the following performance goals:

- Performance Goal #1: To make the greatest possible number of the Region's educators aware of innovative materials and procedures for improving (a) professional preparation, (b) curriculum and instruction, (c) community support, and (d) equity of opportunity for appropriate education.

- Performance Goal #2: To provide access for the greatest possible number of the Region's educators to innovative materials and procedures for improving (a) professional preparation, (b) curriculum and instruction, (c) community support, and (d) equity of opportunity for appropriate education.

- Performance Goal #3: To involve the greatest possible number of the Region's educators in the actual process of integrating the knowledge of science and practice as a means of developing practical ways to meet a particular educational need and/or in other relevant specialized development experiences.

AEL's Annual Goals for 1991-95

Measuring AEL's annual achievement on the foregoing performance goals serves as the basis for the Lab's annual goals. The AEL proposal for 1991-95 calls for collection of baseline performance data in 1991 on each of the three performance goals. In each succeeding year, AEL's Regional Lab is expected to exceed the prior year's performance on each of the three goals. Work on operationalizing the necessary data systems progressed less well in 1991 than was originally anticipated; therefore, establishment of the performance baseline has been delayed. Establishment of the baseline data is now expected to be achieved during 1992. A more detailed explanation of the work undertaken in 1991, the difficulties encountered, and the plans for achieving the needed data systems are included in the description of Task 5 performance presented in the evaluation portion of this section.

Needs Assessment and Planning Process at AEL

In the FY 91-95 contract period, AEL proposed a bold new approach to needs assessment and planning that departed somewhat from past practice in order to achieve new benefits. Under previous Regional Educational Laboratory contracts, AEL had involved hundreds of Lab members and clients, as well as Board members, in surveys and/or group processes that produced statements about the educational needs of the Region. These statements point to chronic, pervasive, and important needs (e.g., early childhood education, community support for schools, transition from school to work/advanced education, and improved basic skills)--needs that still exist today and that are not likely to be ameliorated in the next five years.

Since the AEL Board of Directors represents a microcosm of the Region, staff proposed to work more extensively and intensively with that body to gain more detailed knowledge of the educational needs in each state and use that knowledge to guide Laboratory planning. AEL proposed that this work involve the development of an environmental scanning system that informs Lab planning and the development and implementation of a new structure--the state planning meeting.

News-Scan Database

AEL staff successfully developed and installed the new environmental scanning system (News-Scan) in FY 91. The News-Scan database consists of all the education-related articles published in the largest circulation newspaper of each of the member states. For the October 1990-September 1991 period, staff classified and entered into the News-Scan database 2,694 education-related articles.

The News-Scan database exists in both user-friendly computer form and in clipped and mounted hard copy files. Both the computer form and the hard copy form of the News-Scan database are accessible to AEL staff and Board members. The computer News-Scan database can be accessed by topical descriptor, title, state, newspaper name, and month/year. The pasted-up articles clipped from newspapers are filed in the AEL Resource Center by state, month, and year. AEL staff designed and implemented a study of the intra- and interreliability of descriptor assignments by various levels of staff (senior or junior) in FY 91 with publication of the results expected early in FY 92.

AEL staff designed, planned, produced, and evaluated the News-Scan Bulletin, a new AEL quarterly publication based on a synthesis of data in the News-Scan files, in FY 91. The News-Scan Bulletin provides Board members, policymakers, and AEL staff information about regional trends and issues synthesized from the database. Staff planned a controlled circulation of 100 copies of the premiere issue, along with an evaluation of this first year's publications. Staff published four issues of the News-Scan Bulletin in FY 91. The four issues were distributed to AEL Board members, AEL staff, and policymakers in the AEL Region. Staff designed and installed a mailing list of those interested in regional trends and issues in education in FY 91.

Expanded Board Meeting

The needs assessment and planning process was designed, developed, and implemented in FY 91. The process is carried out in conjunction with the quarterly meetings of the AEL Board of Directors. The process begins with a meeting of the host state Board members and the AEL program directors. The two major purposes of this meeting are: (1) informing each other about AEL's involvement in the host state and (2) building an agenda for the meeting that follows.

The theme of the second meeting in the process is sharing perceptions about the state's education reform initiatives. This meeting includes the participants from the first meeting plus other key education officials and stakeholders from the host state. The latter are identified and invited by the host-state Board members. The intended outcome of this meeting is the identification of perceived short- and long-term needs related to education reform in the host state, as well as identifying R & D processes that participants believe will address those needs.

Next is a followup meeting of the host state Board members. Here, members reflect on both the processes and outcomes of the two preceding meetings. AEL staff act as facilitators of this meeting. From their reflections and discussions, host state Board members prepare a report for the rest of the Board members that discusses the results of the two planning sessions and possible implications for AEL action.

AEL staff follow up on the state caucus report in subsequent Management Team meetings. Staff prepare a report for presentation at the next Board meeting. This report discusses state needs the Lab can address through its current programs, through brokering assistance from other R & D providers, and through seeking new resources. Planning activities culminate each September when AEL is required to submit its program plans for the next year to its funding agency.

The planning process was implemented for the first time at the Kentucky Board meeting in April 1991; was repeated, with some procedural modifications, in conjunction with the July Board of Directors meeting in Williamsburg, VA; and was repeated, again with modifications, in conjunction with the October Board meeting in Nashville, TN. The fourth state planning meeting will occur in conjunction with the Board's January quarterly meeting in Charleston, WV. AEL staff plan to evaluate the planning process by conducting a focus group session with Board members after the fourth planning meeting is completed.

As mentioned, the staff's followup reports provide state officials and AEL staff with information about gaps in the state's education reform efforts. Among the learnings of AEL staff concerning these gaps in education reform efforts are the following:

- Kentucky officials would welcome Laboratory help in the following four areas: communications; research, development, and evaluation; coordination and networking; and professional development. Some possible approaches for AEL staff would be to provide R & D-based information to Kentucky educators and policymakers relevant to reform efforts; assist staff officials in developing a research agenda that addresses the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) components and in carrying out longitudinal studies of KERA implementation; assist the state, as a neutral party, with conflict resolution among groups; and assist Kentucky to integrate technology into reform efforts.

- Virginia officials would welcome Laboratory help on the following main issues: defining a "core curriculum" or "basic learning," modernizing student assessment components, considering a nongraded early elementary program, and improving parental involvement. Some possible approaches for AEL staff would be to re-establish and coordinate an ongoing forum on Virginia reform issues that would bring together representatives from various education professions to discuss state-level needs and reach areas of consensus on state education policy matters that could be communicated to the state's administrative and legislative leadership; and assist the Virginia Department of Education in planning, organizing, and conducting specific professional development workshops in the following areas: (a) site-based decisionmaking, (b) parental involvement, and (c) targets for trainers.

- Tennessee officials would welcome Laboratory help on the following 10 issues: funding for education, use of technology, professional growth and development, parent involvement, accountability, school-based/site-based decisionmaking, extended school program, "disinfranchised" students, differences between urban/rural school districts, and successful programs within Tennessee. One possible approach for AEL staff would be to help lead the education officials in Tennessee to come together, discuss, and develop a "Vision of Education in Tennessee in the 21st Century."

Evaluation at AEL

AEL is an R & D-based organization that is conscientious about making reflective decisions based on the best information available. Systematic evaluation has been an important part of the Laboratory's decisionmaking process. For the contract period of 1991-95, AEL's evaluation design includes five areas: formative and summative evaluation, AEL impact studies, external evaluation of AEL work, quality assurance, and cross-Laboratory evaluation.

Formative and Summative Evaluation

Formative and summative evaluation activities were conducted at three distinct levels in FY 91 at AEL. Each level specifies the parties responsible for the formative and summative evaluation. Level Three is the Board of Directors as a committee of the whole, Level Two is the Program Committee, and Level One is the individual program director. Representative decisions and deliberations completed in FY 91 at each of the three levels are presented next.

At Level Three, in the AEL Board of Directors' first quarterly meeting in FY 91, the Board voted to change the title of its Program Advisory Committees to reflect increased committee involvement in program work. Two groups of "Program Advisory Committees" were approved. The Board also approved the state needs assessment and planning process. In its second quarterly meeting of FY 91, the AEL Board approved placing the leadership of the Colleges and Schools program and the Classroom Instruction program under one program director. In its third quarterly meeting, the Future Committee presented their report on the reorganization of AEL to the full Board. The full Board voted to adopt the AEL reorganization plan and it was implemented over the remainder of Fiscal Year 91. In its fourth FY 91 quarterly meeting, the Future Committee presented, and the full Board approved, the report on three topics: interim corporate goals for October-April, a safety net level for this period, and specific processes for the evaluation of the executive director.

At Level Two, Program Advisory Committees oversee the work of the Lab's eight programs. Each Program Advisory Committee is composed of Board members who sit on two such committees. Program Advisory Committees make both formative and summative decisions. Each committee reviews summative evaluation data related to the program's achievement of its objectives. These data are organized by the major activities of the program. In FY 91, the various Program Advisory Committees reviewed progress on the activities designed to facilitate the accomplishment of program-level objectives; however, being the first year of a five-year contract, there were no summative data submitted to the committees. Presumably this will start to occur in FY 92 and the Program Advisory Committees will begin to render decisions to retain, modify, or otherwise improve the various program activities in relation to their role in meeting the program's objectives. This is the formative evaluation aspect of Level Two decisions.

At Level One, AEL program directors are responsible for both formative and summative evaluation activities. At the project level, program directors are responsible for planning, conducting, and evaluating all of their work. At each quarterly Board meeting, AEL program directors prepared updates on their work and presented these updates to their advisory committees for review. The program directors make the decisions to modify or otherwise improve their projects in the formative evaluation mode. In FY 91, the majority of the evaluation completed at Level One was done in this formative evaluation mode.

AEL proposed to design, test, and install the Goal Accounting Record (GAR) to collect evaluation information at the Laboratory level. The purpose of the new instrument was to track the Lab's efforts in achieving its three performance goals. Early in FY 91, problems arose at the pilot test stage that were not easily or quickly resolved by staff. Basically, asking staff to provide data related to the three performance goals out of context with the five new Lab instrumental goals proved impossible to achieve. Therefore, Lab evaluation staff took more time to redesign the data collection form by adding in five instrumental goals and by making the new form, called the Goal Tracking Record (GTR), more user friendly and useful to the staff of the eight programs. By the end of the fourth quarter of FY 91, the new GTR basic data section had been designed, tested, and installed in the computer. The GTR data collection system should be implemented fully in FY 92, yielding the baseline year data for subsequent years' comparisons.

AEL Impact Studies

AEL proposed to define impact of its work clearly and conduct a minimum of one impact study each year of the 1991-95 contract period. AEL proposed to use the six "stages" in the "continuum of impact," originally presented by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, as the starting point for the AEL impact studies.

Work on the AEL impact study progressed in each quarter. During the first quarter of FY 91, Lab evaluators moved the WMU field test results of the "continuum" to the next step in the process. First, a single, clear definition of impact at AEL was prepared. At AEL, impact is defined as changes in clients' attitudes, knowledge, practices, or policies. Next, a set of seven categories--not stages--of impact, all based on the WMU test results on raw data--was designed. The seven AEL categories of impact are: (1) overall satisfaction, (2) knowledge and/or skills, (3) information sharing, (4) use in planning, (5) use in implementation, (6) indirect benefits, and (7) secondary clients' use in implementation. Then, a clear definition for each of the seven AEL impact categories was developed. In the second quarter of FY 91, these three items were presented to the AEL Management Team for review and consideration. These seven impact categories and their definitions were used as the basis for the development of an initial set of generic instrument items to pilot test in the FY 91 client survey (see below). During the third quarter of this fiscal year, brief descriptions of 13 possible AEL impact studies were submitted to the Management Team for review and discussion. The topic of the impact of various agency linkage strategies (or "interorganizational collectivities," as Mason [1988] labels them) was selected. Thus, AEL will study the impacts of partnerships, collaboratives, consortia, and networks on its clients.

During the fourth quarter, the Management Team discussed various sampling plans and data collection methods for the FY 91 AEL impact study. The Management Team decided to use a purposeful sample of AEL clients known to be linked, through an organization, in one of the four strategies named earlier. Also, the Management Team decided to use the AEL calendar of events as the basis for assembling the purposeful sample, effectively moving the study into FY 92.

External Evaluation of AEL Work

AEL subcontracts with Daniel L. Stufflebeam and staff at The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University, to complete an external evaluation of AEL's work. Negotiated in December 1990 and signed in January 1991, the FY 91 external evaluation subcontract specifies that WMU staff will: (1) complete one impact study, (2) complete a survey of AEL clients regarding AEL products and services, (3) complete a metaevaluation of AEL evaluation reports, and (4) design and conduct an evaluation session for AEL program directors.

The WMU impact study was designed, implemented, and completed between February and October 1991. The basics of a WMU impact study were discussed with Lab evaluators and program directors in a February visit to AEL by William Wiersma, the WMU staff member directing the external evaluation subcontract. Wiersma recommended that the FY 91 WMU impact study be an intensive case study of Cabell County Schools, WV, and their workings with AEL since January 1987: the Management Team concurred. Next, contacts were made, dates were established, and Wiersma and Michael Reed visited Cabell County Schools and interviewed staff during the week of May 13, 1991. In July 1991, WMU evaluators authored the draft report of their intensive case study and submitted it to both AEL staff and Cabell County Schools staff for critical review purposes. AEL evaluators collected reviewed copies of the draft case study report, aggregated the comments into a single response, and forwarded it to Wiersma and Reed. WMU authors revised the draft report and sent a final version to AEL in October 1991, completing the first task in the external evaluation subcontract.

The FY 91 WMU survey of AEL clients was planned, implemented, and completed between February and December of 1991. The survey served two purposes: to develop and test a set of generic stem items related directly to the seven AEL categories of impact and to provide each of the AEL programs with an opportunity to "piggy back" a portion of their program's evaluation to the client survey. As part of his February visit and discussions with AEL program directors, Wiersma received positive reactions to the dual purpose client survey idea. AEL evaluators developed a production schedule for the generation of impact category items from AEL program directors. WMU staff reviewed first-draft items, returned their reviewed items to AEL, and AEL program directors revised their items once more. AEL staff forwarded both the final revisions to the survey instruments and a set of 417 mailing labels to WMU staff. WMU staff completed several followup mailings in order to improve the response rate. Also, they will enter the data from the completed surveys into their computers in December. In January, WMU staff will analyze the data from the client surveys and prepare a report of the results, both the program-specific sections and the institutional-level section.

WMU evaluators conducted an evaluation session with AEL program directors on July 15-16 to address four purposes: (1) present a review of the FY 90 external evaluation, (2) present an update on evaluation in general, (3) present the Joint Committee's evaluation Standards (1981) and the AEL metaevaluation, and (4) work on the FY 91 client survey items. Zoe Barley and Wiersma conducted the session and provided each AEL program director with a discussion draft copy of Evaluation Guide: For Evaluation of Programs, Services, and Organizations, authored by Daniel Stufflebeam.

Finally, metaevaluation of AEL evaluation reports was another task in the external evaluation of AEL work. Here, WMU staff were to apply the 30 Joint Committee's evaluation Standards to all the evaluation reports submitted by AEL program directors. One session and several activities in the July evaluation session with AEL staff introduced the Standards and provided practice in applying them in activities. Further, discussions about particular Standards resulted and AEL program directors were provided copies of all 30 Standards. November 1, 1991, was the deadline for submitting evaluation reports to be sent to WMU for the metaevaluation. However, in a subsequent Management Team meeting, this date was deemed too early, given the number of program and OERI events scheduled for November, the last month in the Fiscal Year, and the need to have time to assemble year-long evaluation data into report formats. Subsequently, the due date was moved to January 2, 1992.

AEL Quality Assurance Program

The two major components of the AEL Quality Assurance program are: (1) the Project Planning and Evaluation Process and (2) the AEL Product Quality Assurance Process. In FY 91, substantial progress was made on the former topic and less progress was made on the latter topic. Each is discussed below.

The Project Planning and Evaluation Process includes both peer review and AEL executive review of both the project plans and the final report. The Project Plan Outline was approved and distributed to AEL program directors in the second quarter of FY 92. The formal definition of a "project" at AEL was approved and communicated to program directors in the third quarter. The Project Planning and Management Process Folder was tested, revised, and approved for use in the fourth quarter. Thus, the three major components of the AEL Project Planning and Evaluation Process were designed, tested, approved, and installed in FY 91, as planned. One objective for FY 92 for this process will be to monitor its implementation and fine-tune it, as appropriate.

The most important component of the AEL Project Quality Process is the AEL Product Quality Manual. At its January 1991 quarterly meeting, the AEL Board of Directors approved the new associate executive director position. One of the major accountabilities of this position will be the quality control of publications. Until that position was filled and work on the new quality control process undertaken, it was decided to continue with the "old" quality control procedures described in the AEL Document Production Manual and the Document Production Checklist. A memo to that effect was sent to AEL program directors late in the first quarter. The newly-created position was filled later; however, the person filling the new position still retained the major responsibilities of the former position in a period of transition. This period of transition continued during the balance of FY 91. One objective for FY 92 would be to develop and implement the AEL Product Quality Assurance Process.

Cross-Laboratory Evaluation

AEL agreed to participate in OERI-led cross-Laboratory evaluation activities starting in FY 92. Part of the meeting of the Laboratory evaluation coordinators held in Philadelphia on October 17-18, 1991, was devoted to the OERI-funded cross-Lab evaluation study. Charles Stalford, OERI, introduced Brenda Turnbull, a Principal in the Policy Study Associates firm and director of the three-year, cross-Lab evaluation study. Turnbull discussed the basics of the evaluation study and highlighted its three major foci: needs assessment and planning, collaboration, and significant Laboratory activities and outcomes. Turnbull also discussed the two main data collection methodologies of field-based case studies and tracer case studies.

Lessons Learned During Year #1

This is the first year of AEL's five-year contract to operate the Regional Educational Laboratory serving Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. AEL envisioned making a number of changes in the organizational structure, governance, and operation during FY 91. Implementing these changes has proven to be a learning experience for both staff and Board members.

To accomplish the instrumental and performance goals it set for itself, AEL developed and began to implement a new corporate organization structure. The implementation has proven to be more time consuming than anticipated. Practical constraints such as the prior commitments of key personnel involved in the reorganization hampered implementation. For example, transfers of key personnel had to be implemented simultaneously so that continuity of work and supervision could be maintained. Delays in the implementation contributed, in domino fashion, to delays in other reorganization tasks. For example, the redesign work needed to put in place the Product Quality Assurance Process was not begun until the fourth quarter, and the Goal Tracking Record was not through its pilot test until the end of the year.

The AEL Board of Directors implemented some changes that reminded staff of the importance of this Board's central involvement in the affairs of the Laboratory. For example, the needs assessment and planning process that the Board initiated at the April Board meeting has evolved rapidly. The process was first conducted in conjunction with the quarterly Board meeting in Kentucky. There, Board members Randy Kimbrough and Sandy Lillard-Adams pulled together key state officials and policymakers to identify and discuss gaps in the implementation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) that AEL could help address. Followup meetings were held with Board members and state officials, resulting in the appointment of AEL's executive director to Chief State School Officer Tom Boysen's team for designing the evaluation of KERA. At the subsequent Board meetings in Virginia and Tennessee, there were similar meetings with similar outcomes. Staff are now in the process of querying the Board about how the needs assessment and planning process might be fine-tuned in FY 92 and, if past is prologue, it seems likely that they will suggest some substantial improvements.

Through the first-year operation of the Laboratory's contract, the most salient lessons learned revolve around both the power and the problems associated with collaboration as a strategy for augmenting the resources that AEL can marshal to address the education needs of the Region. Three representative examples of the power of collaboration will be cited. First, with the collaboration of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) and the Danforth Foundation, AEL sponsored a regional conference on systemic statewide educational reform that was attended by key education officials and policymakers from the member states. Danforth contributed substantial financial support and CPRE contributed organizational support and speakers to the conference. And it was clear to AEL staff involved that the conference was a more effective event because of the involvement of the other two collaborating agencies. Second is the field testing of innovative mathematics instructional improvement materials. Here, AEL is collaborating with the University of Tennessee at Martin to test, at the classroom level, a set of mathematics activities manuals that are based upon the latest research on how children best learn mathematics. Classroom teachers in 21 different school districts are collaborating on this field test effort. Third, in another AEL field test effort, nearly 1,200 classroom teachers in 41 schools in 13 different school districts in the Region are collaborating in the field test of a staff development program designed to improve teachers' questioning skills. On the other hand, we learned, again in 1991, some of the problems in collaboration. For example, in attempting to expand the successful library networks involving new technologies, we learned how resource poor our Region is when several of the preliminary discussions showed the potential sites lacking in some basic library resources that AEL staff felt were necessary precursors to involvement in the type of collaboration envisioned.

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SECTION B: SUMMARY OF AEL PROGRAM GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN FY 91

Classroom Instruction Program

The Classroom Instruction (CI) program is one of seven programmatic activities carried out by AEL to accomplish OERI's Task 2, Assist Efforts to Improve Educational Outcomes, Especially for At-Risk Students. This section offers information about the rationale, procedures, and accomplishments of the Classroom Instruction program during FY 91.

Rationale for Program

Teachers are the heart of education. They have more to do than any other part of the educational establishment with whether or not students actually learn. They are the lifeblood of all teaching and learning accomplished in the hundreds of thousands of classrooms around the nation. Their competence and commitment determines whether plans, policies, and programs actually lead to changes in the lives of children.

In AEL's Region, the approximately 160,000 teachers in 539 districts deal with the problems of students who often come to school ill prepared for academic success and do so with fewer resources than their colleagues in other states. Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia all have lower per pupil expenditures than the national average of $4,243 (Davis & Price, 1990; McDowell & Morgan, 1990; National Rural, Small Schools Task Force Report to the Regional Educational Laboratories, 1988). While reform to address these problems may begin in the U. S. Department of Education, in the statehouses of 50 states, in the central offices of school board meetings of thousands of school districts, or at the principal's desk of every school in the country, it won't be implemented unless the millions of United States teachers incorporate the best changes into their daily curriculum and instructional practices.

Helping to bridge the gap between research-based information that may inform educational reform and daily teaching practices is the focus of AEL's CI program. By linking the world of educational research with the realities of state mandates, federal guidelines, and local regulations, CI staff hope to empower teachers to make sound instructional and school management decisions that increase the learning of students. The importance of involvement in decisionmaking of informed, empowered teachers is emphasized by Loucks-Horsley and others who conclude "The roles of instructional leadership are not exclusive, and the more people in the education community who take on leadership roles, the more likely their sense of commitment and responsibility will lead to school improvement" (Loucks-Horsley, et al., 1987, p. 13).

Through creation of professional development opportunities, CI staff seek to empower teachers in becoming informed through reading and reflection on R & D-based information. Often professional development opportunities in AEL's Region consist of two days of mandatory inservice education on topics with little relationship to teacher or student needs. Beyond their own efforts to obtain training, often in educational administration--the route to better pay--and not in their teaching fields, teachers have few opportunities to observe others teach or to plan to teach with others. The isolation problem is especially pronounced in the small, rural schools of AEL's Region where teachers may teach all subjects and have no time apart from their students during the school day. The CI program strategies provide opportunities for personal professional development through interacting with colleagues, on computer networks, in AEL training, in their own replications of AEL training, as well as through involvement in study groups of practitioners.

The program's focus on professional development of teachers addresses the most promising route to achievement of the national education goals, both in strategy and in content. Of the 19 products created by teachers in CI study groups between 1985-1991, approximately one-third have focused on assisting teachers to deal with the problems of students, rural or urban, who enter school ill-prepared to learn or who become at risk of academic failure. These products include:

- Drawing Marginal Learners Into the Big Picture,
- Helping Hands: Effective Programs for At-Risk Students in Virginia,
- The TEA-AEL Parent Education Notebook,
- Tips for Teaching Marginal Learners,
- The KEA-AEL Early Childhood Resource Kit, and
- Teaching Grade Combination Classes: Real Problems and Promising Practices.

Additional indications of the program's interest in assisting teachers to help at-risk students have been the development and presentation of training-for-trainers events of two AEL School Excellence Workshops (SEWs): "Marginal Learners: Ways to Help through Instruction and Policy" (five training-for-trainers events conducted across three of AEL's four states and one video-teleconference in Virginia); and "Focusing on Motivation: The Need to Succeed" (one training-for-trainer event in June 1990 and one planned for March 1992). Program staff also have assisted in development and cosponsoring of training in the following five SEWs that can help educators better address the needs of improving the graduation rate, preparing students for citizenship and further learning, and establishing a disciplined school environment: "At-Risk Students: The Dropout Problem," "Educating the Preschooler," "Improving Achievement Test Scores," "Parent Involvement," and "What Works: Putting What Works to Work with Parents."

Further program efforts to address the problems of at-risk students include workshops on professional development and on school-based decision-making with the National Education Association's (NEA) Learning Laboratories in Memphis, TN, and in the Jefferson County Schools in Louisville, KY. Further collaboration of program staff with others working to help teachers help students has been as Parent/Community Involvement Researcher on the NEA's School Renewal Network, an electronic bulletin board linking teachers in restructuring schools throughout the country with researchers in universities and Laboratories. Daily activity on the Network provides timely response to teacher questions, in addition to the more than 20 papers entered online each quarter to prompt reflection and discussion among educators about parent and community involvement to improve teaching and learning.

For these reasons the CI program continues to offer and investigate new ways to assist teachers in their own professional development. Through the following procedures, CI staff plan to maximize the impact of federal dollars by using strategies tailored to address current teacher concerns and problems of the Region.

Key Procedures Employed

The CI program employs three basic strategies for assisting teachers: communications, training, and study groups of teachers. Beyond these structures, program staff explore opportunities for technical assistance on projects with schools and/or districts. Each of these as implemented in fiscal year 1991 is described individually.

Communications. The CI staff work with Program Advisory Committee members to solicit articles from teachers about class/school improvement projects and to develop one state-focused issue per quarter of "Focus on Instruction," the program's insert to The Link. By including primarily articles developed by teachers with contact information for the authors, "Focus on Instruction" provides a professional development and recognition opportunity to teachers and links readers with programs and practices they can employ. The insert also provides CI program staff a means of recognizing the contributions of study group members and of announcing the availability of study group products. The approximately 1,472 readers of "Focus on Instruction," roughly 37 percent of all readers of The Link, primarily are teachers. Their opinions of the timeliness, relevance, usefulness, and readability of the insert are evaluated annually through the "Focus on Instruction" Readership Survey included in the third quarter issue. The survey also solicits suggestions for articles and asks readers to provide topics of articles they would like to submit with contact information. This provides staff with a pool of authors for future insert articles.

Another communications strategy employed is the provision of copy and information to editors of association newsletters. Routinely throughout the year, CI staff develop copy on current topics in education, such as the series on school-based decisionmaking that has become a West Virginia School Journal column, and provide these for publication by the four largest teacher associations in the Region, the NEA state affiliates. The newsletters and journals of these associations reach approximately 139,730 teachers in the four states. CI staff also provide information upon request from editors for affiliate articles. The number of articles featuring CI program services or including information provided by CI staff is the measure of the effectiveness of this communications strategy.

Information provision upon request is an important strategy employed by the program to reach the needs of individual teachers. To incoming calls for information, staff responses take the forms of provision of online ERIC search printouts, copies of flyers of AEL products, copies of relevant articles from AEL subject files, and references to others involved in similar projects or to AEL-trained presenters. The means of information response employed include print, phone, and online information provision via the Mastery in Learning School Renewal Network.

The preparation and dissemination of packets of information on AEL and program services and products is the fourth method employed to link teachers with research. Program staff, upon request from associations, departments of education, or districts, provide these collections of program descriptions, sample products and order forms, and selected research of interest to teachers for distribution at conferences, meetings, or to individuals upon request. Packets are also used to enhance entry to new AEL groups during initial meetings. The effectiveness of this strategy may lead to an increase in teacher interaction with the Lab; for example, an increase in teacher sign-up for The Link (sign-up sheets are packet enclosures) from 1,128 for the first quarter of FY 91 to 1,472 for fourth quarter circulation.

Training. The CI staff conduct, often in collaboration with the School Governance and Administration (SGA) program, training-for-trainer workshops in which teachers and administrators are trained to replicate the awareness and skill development activities with their own faculties in followup workshops. In a Region where population centers are near its periphery and whose most isolated populations are near its geographical center, the training-for-trainers strategy extends the reach of program staff while minimizing travel and personnel costs. Planning sessions with departments of education and associations of teachers and administrators, the principal cosponsors of these events, lead to selection from among the 16 AEL SEWs developed to date. Staff work collaboratively with cosponsors to tailor training materials and presentation to state or regional needs. One research-based workshop package, providing all materials and background reading necessary to conduct one or a series of replications, is developed or refined annually by the program. A survey of key collaborators in educator associations and state departments of education helps staff to identify workshop topics. Staff and cosponsoring associations or departments also videotape training events or activities to facilitate wider dissemination of this research-based means of professional development.

CI staff also conduct AEL awareness sessions or special topic workshops upon request from associations or departments of education. Also, staff recommend presenters from among the more than 1,000 educators they have trained as trainers in response to workshop requests. Both training-for-trainers and special topic workshops meet the needs of the Region's educators in two ways. Schools, districts, and even state departments of education do not have the time, and often lack expertise, to develop fully workshop packages on single issues. Further, associations, schools, and districts have the responsibility of providing professional development for the members or staff. Local educators usually have few opportunities to participate in high quality training due to the cost of securing outside presenters and/or releasing and supporting the attendance of teachers who attend state or regional meetings. Provided with a request for training, CI staff can select from the above the most appropriate level of response.

Program staff evaluate participant satisfaction following each training, follow up with an annual survey to determine trainer replications/use of training, and summarize all data to evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy and to point to topics for future training. CI staff inform those trained that AEL will analyze and summarize findings from replication workshops they conduct if they provide copies of the workshop evaluation form included in each training manual.

Study groups. Teachers usually plan and teach in isolation. They receive few opportunities to function at the professional level they are expected to achieve and for which they were trained to perform. Outside of graduate school courses, most teachers do not write or use educational research and lack free time to keep up with professional journals. Yet, teacher interest in being involved in projects that create products useful to their peers can be supported by the hundreds of unpaid hours during 1985-91 invested by more than 100 CI study group members.

Study groups provide an opportunity for teachers with similar interests and experiences to examine literature on an educational idea, plan and implement an action research design, and analyze and report findings in publications announced and disseminated by their associations and AEL. Program staff work with teacher associations to conceptualize the study, nominate members, and facilitate meetings of one study group in each state per year. Staff provide consultative services, handle group correspondence, assist in meeting facilitation and product development, and facilitate product dissemination. Each group has the goal of development of one or more products of use to practitioners. AEL staff assistance ensures that each study group product completes the AEL Product Quality Assurance Process before masters are produced.

The associations of teachers with whom program staff work receive masters of any publication and its announcement flyer upon completion of the group's work. Program staff also announce the products in "Focus on Instruction" inserts and through flyer dissemination, in addition to submitting the publications to the ERIC Clearinghouses for accessioning and to the CSAP network of the Labs and Centers for national announcement. AEL's Resource Center receives masters of each product and disseminates the documents at cost upon request. All draft study group products are submitted to OERI as R & D products for review.

A Study Group Product Assessment Form accompanies each copy of a product printed by AEL or by the cosponsoring association. These provide information on the usefulness of each product, as well as on its impact through reproduction or sharing with colleagues by readers. Each cosponsoring association or other recipient of camera-ready masters of a study group product receives a followup form upon which to record printings and dissemination. Each product also is reviewed by an external expert in its content area and recommendations are incorporated. To evaluate the effectiveness of the study group strategy, each study group member completes a Reflections and Recommendations form that assesses satisfaction with CI staff, association, and study group member roles and performance and encourages suggestions for the improvement of the strategy. During 1991, the client survey completed by AEL's external evaluator Western Michigan University also assessed more than 40 study group members' satisfaction with a number of factors associated with the leadership, communications, organization, product development, and dissemination of the study group's work.

Technical assistance. The inclusion of a technical assistance activity enables CI staff cost effectively to say "yes" to opportunities that may lie ahead for the project. The key procedures employed have included planning, training, and networking assistance. Technical assistance opportunities link CI staff to outside resources and recipients of assistance such as CI staff participation as Parent/Community Involvement Researcher on the NEA School Renewal Network, an electronic bulletin board and network to more than 100 school and university sites of restructuring. Other examples involve staff in local--Kanawha County, WV--assistance efforts that improve relations and provide access to projects of interest to others in AEL's Region. An example of this is the five-year collaboration between AEL, Kanawha County Schools, and the Charleston Regional Chamber of Commerce and Development on Project TEACH. This partnership trains business volunteers to develop and conduct lessons so that teachers may be released to attend professional development sessions. Staff involvement in FY 91 included revisions to the Volunteer Kit, presentation on training and program evaluation in a local television program, training presentation in local Volunteer Orientations and for representatives from interested districts, and evaluation of each Orientation. Additional examples of technical assistance for FY 91 include training in school-based decisionmaking for teachers in the NEA's Learning Laboratory schools in Jefferson County, KY; representation on a Kanawha County Schools Community Service board; and grant reviewer for Parent Involvement grants for the West Virginia Education Fund.

Major Accomplishments by Type or Activity

Activity 1: Communications. Four issues of "Focus on Instruction," each featuring classroom and school improvement practices for one state of AEL's Region, were produced during FY 91 with the collaboration of each PAC member who solicited and developed articles then edited by CI staff. Articles were developed by 38 teachers and other educators for the 4-8 page quarterly insert to *The Link*. After culling at the end of the last funding cycle, readership for the CI insert, primarily classroom teachers, increased from 1,128 to 1,472 in FY 91. Data from the 46 responses to the "Focus on Instruction Readership Survey" included in the third quarter insert were summarized. Ratings on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 6 (highest) resulted in the following mean scores for the characteristics of the insert: readability ($\bar{X}$-5.5), timeliness of content ($\bar{X}$-5.3), usefulness of content ($\bar{X}$-5.0), and relevance of content to your role in education ($\bar{X}$-5.0). Respondents reported sharing their copies of *The Link* with an average of 6.2 other people. The overall quality of *The Link* was rated at 5.6 on the 1-6 scale.

Respondents were asked if they would be willing to contribute an article for the insert and 33 percent indicated they would. Topic choice and contact information is used in letters mailed by program staff to solicit articles before each state's feature issue. When asked "What are some of the ways you used information from articles in the 'Focus on Instruction' insert?," respondents most frequently mentioned to keep current on research findings and sharing information with other colleagues, especially teachers, principals, and parents. Others reported use in classes they were taking, provision of copies to others during staff development, and contact with resource persons cited in the insert. When respondents were asked what they liked about the insert, many cited the currency of information, condensed format, practicality of information, clarity and variety of information, authorship by teachers, and the "big picture" topics. When asked for recommendations on improving the insert, most indicated current satisfaction. Some suggestions included different print formats, color, and size; an occasional theme issue; and more articles on specific topics. When asked what topics, materials, or program they would like to see included in articles in future issues, readers responded with more than 30 suggestions.

Another goal of program staff is to reach teachers through the inclusion of information about or from AEL in their professional associations' journals. During FY 91, program staff developed copy or provided information for 22 articles that were included by editors of the NEA state affiliates in monthly journals or newsletters. These ranged from announcements of upcoming training or study group participation opportunities to feature articles on AEL and ERIC/CRESS services for teachers. TEA's Tennessee Teacher included a monthly column, "Research and Development Update," that used several excerpts from each program-provided "R & D Notes." Since January 1991, WVEA's West Virginia School Journal has featured a monthly column entitled "AEL Highlights" that included program-developed updates on skills needed for school-based decisionmaking. Outreach to other journals remains a program objective and two examples from 1991 included: information on parent involvement and ways parents can help children at home used in a "Tips for Parents" article in the August issue of McCall's magazine and information on notable parent involvement programs featured in "Are We Patronizing Parents?" in the May/June issue of NEA Today. Also, the May 15 issue of Education Week contained a review of the VEA-AEL study group product Teaching Combined Grade Classes: Real Problems and Promising Practices.

Packets of information on AEL and the CI program are distributed regularly distributed by program staff and board members in awareness sessions or at association or department of education conferences or meetings. During FY 91, 5,215 educators received packets prepared by the program for 42 events.

Response to requested information remains a priority for program staff in linking teachers with answers to their questions/problems in education. Program staff responded to more than 2,020 requests for information from educators in the Region (245-Kentucky, 238-Tennessee, 597-Virginia, and 571-West Virginia) and in other states-312. Responses were communicated via telephone, correspondence, FAX, and online communication via the CI staff role as Parent/Community Involvement Researcher on the NEA/IBM Network (154 papers entered in FY 91).

Activity 2: Training. The CI program conducted five training-for-trainer events during FY 91, four of which were cosponsored by the School Governance and Administration program. Four related to school-based decisionmaking and one focused on parental involvement. School-based decisionmaking was the topic of training events conducted in Tennessee (May-42 participants), Virginia (July-36 participants), and West Virginia (September-24 participants and October-29 participants). All were cosponsored by teacher and other educator associations. The Tennessee Department of Education and several associations cosponsored and coordinated the May event. The West Virginia training events were cosponsored by the West Virginia Department of Education and administrator and teacher associations. For all events, CI staff held major roles in planning, communications, development and provision of materials, presentation, and evaluation. Of the 158 workshop participants, 149 completed evaluation forms that were summarized for each event, then analyzed across all events. Results across all five events are reported below.

Items relating to the role of AEL were rated on a 0 (lowest) to 50 (highest) scale. Seven of the eight items had workshop combined means higher than 43. These were, ranked from highest to lowest: responsiveness of AEL staff and/or consultants to requests for service and/or assistance during this event ($\overline{X}$-46.7), skill of AEL staff and/or consultants in completing their tasks ($\overline{X}$-46.2), usefulness of materials provided to participants ($\overline{X}$-45.7), how this event enhanced AEL's credibility as an R & D provider ($\overline{X}$-45.5), AEL carrying out planned activities at the times scheduled ($\overline{X}$-44.6), AEL staff and/or consultants' understanding of participants' needs during this events ($\overline{X}$-43.5), and clarity of AEL staff and/or consultants' explanations ($\overline{X}$-41.2). The lowest rated item was convenience of the event to the participants' location ($\overline{X}$-38.4).

Six items related to workshop logistics and benefits. These were responded to on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale. The combined workshop means were all above the 4 point on the scale. The highest rated item was: the presenters were well prepared ($\overline{X}$-4.78). The next highest rated item was: I plan to incorporate some of the workshop materials into my own program ($\overline{X}$-4.78). Three items had very similar, positive means. They were: I feel this program will be useful in my school district ($\overline{X}$-4.42), the presenters allowed enough time for questions and responses ($\overline{X}$-4;35), and I feel the objectives of the workshop were met ($\overline{X}$-4.30). The lowest rated item was: the workshop met my expectations ($\overline{X}$-4.09). A followup survey will be conducted in FY 92 to determine the number of workshop replications conducted by participants and other uses found for training information and materials.

The CI staff also conducted, throughout the Region, 48 AEL awareness sessions or special request workshops on topics such as school-based decisionmaking, motivation, and parent involvement. They drew frequently upon the series of SEW packages used for training-for-trainer events. Each was evaluated by participants as well managed and relevant to their roles. Program staff began development of a new SEW package, 17th in the series. "Linking the Disciplines: A Holistic Approach to Curriculum Design" will be submitted in draft form to OERI by December 31, 1991. The final version of the workshop package, providing all materials necessary to conduct one or a series of workshop in interdisciplinary curriculum and instruction, will be submitted during the first quarter of FY 92. Completion of study group products and a shortage of staff forced the delay in submission.

The CI staff, often with SGA representatives, conducted seven training planning meetings throughout the Region that resulted in eight training-for-trainer events with an additional two planned for 1992. Finally, CI staff linked approximately 25 workshop requestors with contact information on AEL-trained presenters in the SEW series, and assisted with packet/materials provision for more than 15 CI PAC members, association colleagues, former Board members, and study group members who conducted AEL awareness sessions or other workshops on AEL's behalf.

Activity 3: Study groups. CI staff collaborated with teacher associations in all four states to sponsor study groups of teachers that investigated single educational issues and developed products of use to practitioners. The following study group products were submitted to OERI during FY 91: WVEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Casebook (3/28/91), Ungraded Primary Programs: Steps Toward Developmentally Appropriate Instruction (a KEA-AEL study group product, 6/14/91), Surviving the Worst, Expecting the Best: Teacher Perceptions of Work Life in Virginia Schools (a VEA-AEL study group product, 11/26/91), and Bits, Bytes, and Barriers: Tennessee Teachers' Use of Technology (a TEA-AEL study group product submitted in draft 11/26/91). The first two publications were submitted to the ERIC Clearinghouses for accessioning and to the CSAP network of Labs and Centers for announcement, as was Teaching Combined Grade Classes: Real Problems and Promising Practices, a VEA-AEL study group product completed in November 1990. The latter was announced by CSAP, as were the WVEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Casebook, Ungraded Primary Programs..., and the TEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Resource Packet #1: What Is Site-Based Decisionmaking?, a TEA-AEL study group product completed in December 1990. Middle Schools in the Making: A Lesson in Restructuring, a 1989-90 VEA-AEL study group product, was accessioned to the Clearinghouses.

The CI program currently has 19 publications authored by study groups available at cost through AEL's Resource Center and printed and disseminated by the cosponsoring educator associations. During FY 91, the Resource Center disseminated 835 copies of CI products to educators from across the nation. The two most requested titles were: Teaching Combined Grade Classes... (271 copies purchased) and Middle Schools in the Making... (123 copies purchased). Association printing of study group products during FY 91 totaled 16,922 copies, most of which were distributed free to members. Each copy produced by AEL is distributed with a Study Group Product Assessment Form requesting that this evaluation data be returned to AEL. CI staff provide masters and request that associations also include the forms in their dissemination of study group products. Assessment forms were returned by 17 product users. Readers were asked to rate from 0 (lowest) to 50 (highest) items relating to ease of getting the publication ($\bar{X}$-43.8), clarity ($\bar{X}$-46,1), credibility ($\bar{X}$-45.2), and usefulness of the information ($\bar{X}$-40.9). Thirteen readers named specific sections they found useful and nine suggested changes. Most reported learning about the product from The Link and others learned from colleagues or other means including one reference to a study group product in a dissertation. Thirteen indicated they had or intended to share the report with other educators.

At the conclusion of each FY 91 study group's work, members were asked to respond to open-ended questions of two types, ones related to specific study group outcomes and general ones related to study group skill development, benefits to study group participants and their associations, and AEL's involvement in the study group process. Items relating to the satisfaction with study group outcomes indicated strong feelings of group accomplishment. Averaged data across the two study groups whose work concluded in FY 91 indicate the following:

Respondents were asked "What have you learned about conducting research?" They indicated that they learned that research was time-consuming, difficult to keep objective, easily biased, but important if it can provide information for making instruction more effective. Participants indicated they had learned specific skills for data collection using survey and interview methods. Respondents were asked "In what ways have you found participation in the study group to be professionally rewarding?" They indicated opportunities to find out what was going on in other places, opportunities to learn from and network with other study group participants, and development of research skills. Respondents indicated that their professional associations benefited from study group efforts through gaining information to be used with legislators, citizen groups, and others and through giving the association credibility with its membership by providing members information and promotion of educational change.

Respondents indicated strengths of the group's work as: leadership, willingness to work, desire to learn, concern for and commitment to the teaching profession, quality of study group membership, enthusiasm, acceptance of others' ideas, honesty with each other, strong group rapport, and non-threatening group atmosphere. Weaknesses were cited as: physical distance between group members, lack of knowledge of the research process, lack of adequate time, differential writing styles, and differential levels of individual involvement.

Respondents were asked "How could AEL's assistance to study groups be improved?" Most of the comments indicated the study group members were pleased with and thankful for the material and consultation assistance provided by AEL. Comments were made relative to providing more clearly defined directions, examples of other study group products, more practice in conducting interviews, and a bit more respect for professional educator know-how. Respondents suggested ways in which AEL and the professional associations could assist in disseminating study group products.

Another indication that study group members found their involvement to be a professional development experience was shown by the presentations of their findings at regional KEA meetings of the KEA-AEL authors of Ungraded Primary Programs.

Activity 4: Technical assistance. Classroom Instruction staff have analyzed and summarized evaluation data for each Volunteer Orientation for Project TEACH over the project's five-year implementation. Those data for FY 91 indicate that the highest ratings were given in the categories "Volunteers' packet materials are useful," "Presentations were clear," and "Presentations were practical." Throughout the project's history, trainers of the Volunteers have worked to improve the lowest rated item, "Overall, I feel I'm ready to teach my first lesson." Increased planning time was incorporated into FY 91 Orientations and followup technical assistance continues to be offered.

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School Governance and Administration Program

The School Governance and Administration (SGA) program is one of seven programmatic activities carried out by AEL to accomplish OERI's Task 2, Assist Efforts to Improve Educational Outcomes, Especially for At-Risk Students. This section offers information about the rationale, procedures, and accomplishments of the SGA program during FY 91.

Rationale for Program

SGA works primarily with local school administrators including superintendents and their staff and principals. In one special project, the Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking (QUILT) field test, SGA works also with teachers. SGA works with school boards to a lesser extent, almost exclusively through state school board associations.

In practice, most SGA work is done collaboratively with state professional associations for administrators. Some of these associations are umbrella organizations for other administrator groups, e.g., Leadership in Educational Administration Development (LEAD) or the associations in Kentucky and Tennessee.

SGA's target audience is important because school administrators are the gatekeepers to change. At a different level, school boards can also enable schools to change. Although those responsible for administration and governance do not single-handedly determine what happens in classrooms, they can facilitate or impede changes that affect what all children learn. As schools in the AEL Region move toward "site-based" decisionmaking and local school improvement councils, the principal's role becomes even more crucial.

While administrators perceive themselves as having many needs, SGA has chosen to give priority to professional development, emphasizing in particular those skills that directly affect classroom learning. Given the demographics of the Region with respect to an aging workforce of school administrators, their training is dated. Approximately half of the principals in the AEL Region are within five years of retirement. With the rapid pace of change through state-mandated reform programs, school administrators need to respond to changes in societal expectations, technology, and laws that did not exist when they received their formal training.

Key Procedures Employed

As is the case with AEL's Classroom Instruction (CI) program, SGA attempts to reach its audience with research-based information through two major types of face-to-face contact, supplemented by a program of disseminating generic information as widely as possible.

Information dissemination. This activity is a way of creating awareness about the availability of research-based information and of the existence of AEL as a source of that information.

Training. CI and SGA use the same strategy, which includes collaborating with partners in participating states, usually professional associations or state education agencies, and individual school districts, as in the QUILT field test. AEL develops and field tests training materials and absorbs the cost of the trainers, but partners handle other expenses, such as the costs of reprinting training materials, location expenses, and sponsoring participants.

Professional development and technical assistance. Study groups are labor-intensive efforts that give participants experience in analyzing and applying research-based information. QUILT began its life as a Kentucky study group with five school districts nominated by the Kentucky Association of School Administrators. No new study groups have begun during FY 91 as staff are conducting the field test of QUILT.

Networking and collaboration. SGA promotes networking as a way to disseminate information through the LEAD Centers in each state and through the Network of Schools. Further, the network of 13 school districts that are collaborating in the field test of the QUILT Staff Development Program is another example of information dissemination.

Major Accomplishments by Activity

Activity 1: Information dissemination. This activity includes writing and disseminating quarterly each of the following: "SGA Exchange," "LEAD News in the Region," "R & D Notes," and information resource packets. Four issues of the "SGA Exchange" included 16 articles written by educators in each of the states. A total of six copies of the "LEAD News in the Region" memo was shared with LEAD directors along with 188 new resources for them to share with their clients. The four AEL Board members who advise the SGA program received monthly mailings with 141 new resources to share in their districts. As a service to the Kentucky LEAD project, SGA sent 79 resource materials to approximately 40 members of the Kentucky beginning superintendents and mentors.

During October 1991, a Readership Survey was sent to a random sample of 180 out of the 2,500 "Exchange" readers. "Exchange" is an insert in the AEL publication, The Link. Sixty-one were returned in time to be used in this analysis, a return rate of 34 percent. The survey consisted of four items asking respondents to rate selected characteristics of the "Exchange," an item asking respondents to rate the overall quality of The Link; an item asking respondents how many people they share The Link with; an item asking respondents if they would be willing to contribute an article for the "Exchange" insert, and if so, on what topic; and one open-ended item asking respondents how they used information from the "Exchange" insert.

The four items related to "Exchange" characteristics asked respondents to rate each characteristic on a 1 to 6 scale, where 1 was the lowest rating and 6 was the highest rating. All four items had means above 5 on the scale. The highest rated item was "Exchange" readability (5.39). The second highest rating was on "Exchange" usefulness of content (5.28). Third was timeliness of content (5.16) and fourth was relevance of content to your role in education (5.05).

Respondents reported sharing their copies of The Link with an average of 7.5 other people. The overall quality of The Link was rated at 5.33 on the 1 to 6 point scale. Clearly, this respondent group holds very positive opinions about The Link and the "Exchange" insert and, since this was a random sample of readers, these results should generalize to the population of The Link and "Exchange" readers.

Respondents were asked: What are some of the ways you used information from articles in the "Exchange" insert? Respondents reported a variety of uses for information from the "Exchange" insert. Many of these related to using the "Exchange" to keep current on research findings and sharing information with other colleagues.

During October 1991, A Readership Survey was sent to a random sample of 112 "R & D Notes" readers. Forty-seven were returned in time to be used in this analysis, a return rate of 42 percent. The survey consisted of five items asking respondents to rate selected characteristics of "R & D Notes," an item asking respondents how many people they share the "R & D Notes" with, and two open-ended items, one asking respondents how they used information from "R & D Notes" and one asking for any additional comments on "R & D Notes."

The five items related to "R & D Notes" characteristics asked respondents to rate each characteristic on a 1 to 6 scale, where 1 was the lowest rating and 6 was the highest rating. All five items had means above 5 on the scale. The highest rated item was "R & D Notes" readability (5.57), and the second highest rating was on "R & D Notes" overall quality (5.30). Two items had very close means and were rated somewhat lower than the highest two. These were: relevance of content to your role in education (5.15) and timeliness of content (5.13). The lowest rated item, still clearly in the very positive range of the scale, was: usefulness of content (5.02). Respondents reported sharing their copies of "R & D Notes" with an average of 17 other people. Clearly, this respondent group holds very positive opinions about "R & D Notes" and, since this was a random sample of readers, these results should generalize to the population of "R & D Notes" readers.

Respondents were asked: What are some of the ways you used information from articles in "R & D Notes"? Respondents reported a variety of uses of "R & D Notes." Many of these related to using "R & D Notes" to keep current on research findings and sharing information with other colleagues. Some respondents reported using "R & D Notes" for informing parents, school board members, and the general public through speeches and newspaper articles. Some respondents indicated information was used for planning, for improving classroom instruction, and for identifying resources for additional information on "R & D Notes" topics.

Respondents were asked: Do you have any additional comments on "R & D Notes"? Most of the additional comments were ones of thanks for AEL providing this service and the desire that AEL continue this publication. As one of the respondents stated: "Excellent 'thumbnail' approach to review of current research. I appreciate receiving 'R & D Notes'."

Activity 2: Training. The CI and SGA programs conducted four training workshops, three related to school-based decisionmaking and one related to parental involvement. Workshop participants completed a session evaluation form (N = 149). Overall, the results were very positive about the role of AEL in conducting the workshops and the benefits of the workshops. See the CI description for a complete report on the evaluation of these four workshops from consultant Jack Barnette. As part of the QUILT field test, SGA conducted one five-day workshop for 43 trainers from 13 districts. These trainers conducted 35 replications as part of the QUILT field test.

Activity 3: Field test of QUILT. In this annual report of Activity 3, Field Test of the QUILT Staff Development Program, the reader will find a discussion of the following: (1) description of the field test of the QUILT Staff Development Program, (2) recruitment and selection of the field test districts, (3) description of the instruments used to assess program effectiveness, (4) analysis of the pretest data, (5) development and distribution of materials, (6) distribution of materials for implementation of the QUILT Staff Development Program, (7) training-for-trainers, and (8) implementation of QUILT in the field test districts.

1. Description of the field test of the QUILT Staff Development Program. The QUILT Staff Development Program, a yearlong professional development experience for teachers, has three major components: a) induction: a three-day training that introduces the content of the QUILT Model Teacher Behaviors for effective classroom questioning; (b) Collegiums: periodic forums for learning, sharing, and interacting about discrete questioning behaviors targeted for practice and improvement; and (c) Practicums: application in the classroom, discussion with students of the questioning behaviors, and observations by and of a partner.

   Not only is the effectiveness of QUILT being measured, but also the QUILT program is being compared with the effectiveness of two more traditional systems of delivering staff development: (a) an intensive three-day workshop and (b) a three-hour awareness session.

   In 41 schools in 13 districts throughout the AEL Region, these three forms of staff development have been implemented. Each district agreed to collect data about the effectiveness of each. In FY 91, districts administered pretests to more than 1,200 participating teachers to measure such things as: teacher attitudes facilitative of classroom questioning, teacher knowledge about classroom questioning, student perceptions about classroom questioning, teacher and student classroom questioning behaviors as coded from videotapes, teacher feelings of responsibility for student performance, and student achievement or student grades.

2. Recruitment and selection of field test districts. SGA staff and consultant/evaluator Jack Barnette selected 14 districts to participate in the field test of the QUILT Staff Development Program; one dropped out in the spring when the superintendent changed. Of the remaining 13 districts, three are in Kentucky, three in Tennessee, two in Virginia, and five in West Virginia--including one private school district, the West Virginia Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Most of the schools are in rural, small city, or suburban areas. Teachers from all grade levels and subject areas are represented.

   A meeting of QUILT site coordinators was held on March 7-8 in Charleston, WV; all districts were represented. The major objectives of that meeting were to: (a) describe the QUILT Staff Development Program in sufficient detail so that coordinators could make plans (with adequate time and resources) to implement QUILT in each district, and (b) describe the research design and evaluation of the QUILT Staff Development Program such that coordinators clearly understood their role and responsibility in collecting data from participating teachers.

3. Description of the instruments used to assess program effectiveness. During FY 91, AEL staff and consultants finished work on seven instruments, having obtained adequate measures of reliability on all. A paper, "Research Design of the QUILT Staff Development Program," outlines the hypotheses and variables of the study. Additionally, AEL staff prepared a Data Collection Coordinator's Manual in March 1991. This manual outlines all of the data collection responsibilities, and it lists all 46 schools involved in this year's field test.

   In order to standardize the administration of pretests, AEL prepared a videotape that coordinators could show at the time pretest instruments were administered. This video gives a rationale for the collection of data, a brief description of QUILT, and instructions for the completion of the instruments. The following four instruments were administered to all prospective QUILT participants:

   - QUILT Personal Code--This instrument will help participants construct their personal six-digit code, helping to assure confidentiality and anonymity and eliminating the need for participants to use names in completing pretest data forms.

   - Opinionnaire About Effective Classroom Questioning--This 50-item instrument was designed to measure teacher attitudes facilitative of or a hindrance to effective classroom questioning. (Alpha reliability of 0.83)

   - Questionnaire on Effective Classroom Questioning--This 49-item instrument was designed to measure teacher knowledge about concepts of effective classroom questioning as presented in the QUILT Staff Development Program. (Alpha reliability of 0.66)

   - QUILT Demographic Information Form--This instrument provides information about participants such as subject taught, number of years experience, grade level taught, age, gender, race, and previous staff development experiences related to the topic of effective classroom questioning.

AEL selected a random sample of 150 teachers from whom additional data were collected. Every teacher in each of the three treatment groups was assigned a three-digit number; 50 were selected from each of the three groups using the table of random numbers. Because of the requirement that all of these teachers be videotaped during a classroom episode in which questioning was the primary instructional strategy, only regular classroom teachers were included in the sample, that is, the sample does not include teachers whose primary area of responsibility is special education, physical education, art, music, driver's education, or certain vocational education teachers.

From the teachers in the sample, QUILT site coordinators collected the following additional data:

- Responsibility for Student Achievement--This 16-item instrument, developed by T. Guskey, produces two scores of interest to this research effort: responsibility for positive student outcomes and responsibility for negative student outcomes. (Reliability greater than 0.80)

- Stages of Concern Questionnaire--This 35-item instrument identifies where participants' concerns are on a continuum of stages related to change and implementation of a new program. (Alpha ranges from 0.64 to greater than 0.70 on the seven SoC scales.)

- Classroom Questioning Observation Instrument (CQOI)--The purpose of this instrument is to measure the frequency and quality of certain teacher and student questioning, responding, and reacting behaviors. It will be coded from 15-minute videotapes of actual classroom instruction in which teachers use questioning as a primary instructional technique. (Interrater reliability greater than 0.90)

- Student Perceptions of Questioning and Responding (SPQR)--The purpose of this instrument is to identify what students believe about questioning in the classroom. This instrument will be administered only to students, grades 5-12, who are enrolled in the videotaped classes of sample teachers. (Alpha reliability of 0.88)

Another major task having to do with instruments for the field test of QUILT had to do with finding an instrument to measure impact on students. AEL staff began researching possibilities of an instrument to measure student achievement or higher order thinking skills; however, instruments are difficult to find. We were unable to find an instrument that met our criteria: reliable, brief to administer, easy to score, and widely recognized as an appropriate assessment for students in both elementary and secondary schools. However, because staff believe it is important to get a measure of student outcomes in addition to (a) behaviors from CQOI and (b) perceptions from the SPQR, plans are underway to use standardized achievement test data and/or teacher-given end-of-semester grades. These data will not be collected until FY 92, and then only from districts that are agreeable to this additional data request.

4. Analysis of the pretest data. In the spring quarter, nearly 1,200 teachers completed pretest instruments. Jack Barnette, QUILT evaluator, has completed preliminary analysis.

   On the Questionnaire on Effective Classroom Questioning, a total of 1,147 teachers had a mean score of 22.54 items correct. There was a statistically significant difference between the randomly assigned treatment groups--(A) those participating in the full QUILT program (22.83), (B) those participating only in the 18-hour induction workshop (22.94), and (C) those participating in a three-hour awareness session about effective questioning (21.89); however, the actual difference is only 1.05 out of a possible 49 items. We anticipate the treatment differences will be much more significant in the posttest.

   On the Responsibility for Student Achievement test, administered to a random sample of 122 teachers, there were no significant differences between the three QUILT treatment groups on any of the four scales.

   On the seven scales of an instrument, Stages of Concern, which was administered to a random sample of 121 teachers, there were no significant differences between the three treatment groups. As expected early in the implementation of a project, teachers had concerns high in the Awareness, Information, Personal, and Management stages; low in Consequence, Collaboration, and Refocusing stages.

5. Development of QUILT materials. Throughout the spring of 1991, the QUILT Collegiums and Practicums were piloted in Cabell County, WV, with the staff from Beverly Hills Middle School, which had participated in the QUILT induction training in November 1990. Based on (a) reactions from Sue Bowen, the director of staff development in Cabell County and facilitator of the QUILT program in Cabell County, (b) teacher comments, and (c) written teacher evaluation comments, SGA staff and consultant/developer Jackie Walsh completely redesigned the QUILT Collegiums and Practicums. Layout and design work was completed on the seven pieces comprising the Collegiums and Practicums. These pieces were sent to the Government Printing Office for bids and duplication.

   Final revisions were made to the QUILT Induction training, based on evaluations from pilot tests. Final design work was completed on the Induction Manual, and it was sent to the Government Printing Office for duplication.

   SGA staff and a consultant developed the three-hour training of QUILT used in schools in the "C condition" or the "three-hour treatment condition."

The QUILT Induction Workshop Trainers' Tapes, a seven-tape set, were edited, transparencies from the induction lecturettes were inserted, and 15 sets were duplicated for distribution to the 13 participating districts. Additionally, a table of contents was prepared for each tape in the series so that trainers can readily find the material they need on each of the seven tapes.

Consultant Jackie Walsh and staff wrote, edited, revised, and copied QUILT Collegiums and Practicums: Facilitator's Guide, a document that provides (a) the rationale for the Collegiums, (b) suggestions for how to conduct the Collegiums and Practicums, and (c) information about establishing and maintaining a culture to promote effective questioning within a school.

A videotape showing a sample questioning episode and feedback from a partner was produced for use in Collegium 2.

6. Distribution of materials for implementation of the QUILT Staff Development Program. A labor-intensive effort this year involved the distribution of materials to all 13 field test sites. In a separate mailing from AEL, each district received the following materials in order to implement the field test of the QUILT Staff Development Program: (a) Trainers' Tapes for the QUILT Induction Workshop, a set of seven videotapes to guide trainers through the lecturettes and activities of the QUILT Induction Workshop; (b) QUILT Induction Lecturettes, a document containing the scripts of the lectures presented during the QUILT induction training; (c) QUILT Readings, which includes key articles that summarize research about effective questioning; (d) overhead transparencies for conducting the QUILT Induction Workshop and the QUILT Collegiums; (e) QUILT Induction Manuals for every participating teacher in A and B schools; (f) QUILT Samplers, the materials used during the three-hour awareness presentation about QUILT, for each teacher in C schools; (g) QUILT Collegiums and Practicums: A Facilitator's Guide, a manual describing the QUILT Collegiums; (h) Improving Teaching Through Coaching, a PDK fastback about coaching; (i) QUILT Collegiums 1-7 for all teachers in A schools; (j) Teaching and the Art of Questioning, a PDK fastback used during two Collegiums, for every participating teacher in A schools; (k) QUILT evaluation forms, to be administered following the QUILT induction training; (l) QUILT logos for all teachers in A schools; (m) videotape to be used during Collegium 2; and (n) seven copies of "QUILT Progress Check" for each participating teacher in A schools, to capture teacher comments about what they have done in their classrooms (outside of the training sessions)--one to be completed at the beginning of each Collegium.

7. QUILT training-for-trainers. Each district was invited to send a team of trainers, who would lead the QUILT Staff Development Program throughout the 1991-92 school year. During the week of June 16-22, AEL staff and consultants worked with 43 trainers from the 13 QUILT field test sites. The training-for-trainers began on Sunday evening. Participants introduced themselves, completed a pretest on Stages of Concern among

change facilitators, and heard a description of the QUILT Staff Development Program, the field test research design, and their roles in each. The QUILT induction training was presented on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. In evening sessions on Monday and Wednesday, participants discussed training issues and received materials developed specifically for trainers. On Thursday, QUILT Collegiums 1 and 2 were presented; on Friday, the trainers addressed global issues such as promoting a positive climate; developing a QUILT culture within a district or school; selling the program to teachers, administrators, and members of the community; and sustaining the interest and energy over the course of the school year.

8. Implementation of the QUILT Staff Development Program in field test sites. During August, trainers conducted the QUILT Induction Workshop (in Schools A and B) with nearly 600 teachers. Additionally, another 300 teachers participated in the three-hour awareness training (School C treatment) during August or September. Beginning in September, School A teachers throughout the districts began participating in Collegiums and Practicums.

At the end of the training sessions, participants were asked to complete an evaluation form. For both types of training sessions, participants were asked 15 Likert-type items. For those in the three-day session, there were an additional 28 items asking the extent to which knowledge was gained and the extent to which session topics were understandable. Each item had a five-point scale, where 1 represented "not at all" and 5 represented "very much." As of this report, 669 session evaluation forms have been analyzed for participants in the three-day sessions, referred to as those in condition A and B schools. For the total of 28,505 item responses on the 43 items, 84.7 percent indicated a 4 or 5 on the scale and the mean of these items was 4.29.

As of this report, 381 session evaluation forms have been analyzed for participants in the three-hour awareness sessions, referred to as those in condition C schools. For the total of 5,664 item responses on the 15 session evaluation items, 84.3 percent indicated a 4 or 5 on the scale and the mean of these items was 4.33.

For the QUILT research design to provide for viable condition comparisons, it was important that participants trained in the three-hour awareness condition feel they received high quality training. Eight items provide evidence that this occurred. The session (1) was conducted in a professional manner (AB 4.72, C 4.74); (2) was conducted in a positive climate (AB 4.70, C 4.53); (3) was conducted by a competent trainer (AB 4.67, C 4.66); (4) had clear objectives (AB 4.56, C 4.55); (5) had objectives that were met (AB 4.44, C 4.37); (6) was relevant to my needs (AB 4.09, C 4.03); (7) had activities that were well sequenced (AB 4.47, C 4.40); and (8) has stimulated me to want to use materials and skills in my position (AB 4.31, C 4.21).

AEL staff planned an additional strategy to encourage full implementation of the QUILT Staff Development Program. Districts in the field test were invited to attend a fall meeting to preview Collegiums 3-7, share success stories, and jointly to solve problems that may have arisen in the implementation. One meeting was held in Charleston, WV, on October 23-24. A second meeting, for districts in Tennessee, was held on November 14.

Throughout the year, SGA staff continued to network with the field test districts by issuing three memos called "The QUILT Sampler." In this memo, AEL has documented teacher practices, provided examples, and shared trainers' ideas that have helped to establish QUILT as a primary focus of teachers within a given school.

Activity 4: Professional development and technical assistance. Professional development and technical assistance include the provision of technical assistance and the brokering of information via telephone, FAX, and letters to administrators and school boards associations, school administrators and central office staff, institutions of higher education, and LEAD Centers outside the Region. Staff disseminated study group products through the LEAD Centers both inside and outside the AEL Region. AEL's Distribution Center recorded more than 200 requests for the Conversations With the Best and the Brightest and the two parent involvement publications, Rationale: Why Parent Involvement? and School Advisory Councils.

By design, SGA did not start any new study groups this year due to the large effort expended in the field test of the QUILT Staff Development Program. SGA staff provides ongoing technical assistance and professional opportunities to the 43 trainers in the 13 field test school districts.

Activity 5: Networking and collaboration. SGA works with the AEL Network of Schools, a voluntary group of administrators representing 41 schools and districts in the Region. The purpose of the Network is to disseminate information on ideas and educational innovations. Staff developed a project plan, which was approved by the SGA Program Advisory Committee and AEL administration. The plan consists of surveying members to identify topics of interest, using audiotapes to disseminate information, and continuing activities of sending information packages and teleconferences. The top three topics members selected were (1) authentic assessment of student progress, (2) nongraded primary, and (3) restructuring secondary schools. Audiotapes will be developed on these or related topics in FY 92. The purposes of these tapes are (a) to disseminate information and (b) to evaluate audiotapes as a means of disseminating information. Members received three mailings, including the pilot audiotape, "AEL Network of Schools' Conversations About Year-Round Education." Educators from four states and the executive director of the National Association for Year-Round Education were interviewed; excerpts from the interviews were used to produce the audiotape on year-round education.

Staff maintained telephone contacts with clients, having received 716 incoming calls from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, and 118 calls from within the state. Staff made approximately 1,047 outgoing calls to educators in the Region. Documentation by staff indicated that 6,350 contacts occurred with educators in the Region.

Colleges and Schools Program

The Colleges and Schools (C & S) program is one of seven programmatic activities carried out by AEL to accomplish OERI's Task 2, Assist Efforts to Improve Educational Outcomes, Especially for At-Risk Students. This section offers information about the rationale, procedures, and accomplishments of the Colleges and Schools program during FY 91.

Rationale for the Program

AEL's Region is blessed with a great many institutions of higher education. The faculty in these geographically well-dispersed colleges and universities represent a tremendous potential resource for improving the local schools near them. It is this resource that the C & S program draws upon for the benefit of both the Region's colleges and local schools. Based upon the strong recommendation of the state affiliates of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) officials with whom the program has worked closely since 1986, the primary focus in the current funding cycle is on building partnerships between the Region's colleges and neighboring local schools.

The decision to center program efforts on partnerships is based upon a consensus in recent literature that much closer collaboration between colleges and local schools is necessary for the improvement of both institutions. The report of a Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching study of higher education in West Virginia offered 10 priority recommendations--the first was that college-school partnerships be implemented (Boyer, 1989). One rationale offered for this recommendation was that "The quality of higher education can rise no higher than the quality of the public schools" (Boyer, 1989). Even a casual survey of the current literature produces a plethora of articles that support college-school collaboration (cf. Irvin, 1990; Roth, 1989; Leinhardt, 1990; Wilbur, Lambert, & Young, 1987; and Yount and Magurn, 1989).

The C & S program bases its activities on many of the principles underlying the professional development schools--for example, the idea that school-college collaboration "...should be a way for teachers, administrators, and professors to come together on equal footing" (Holmes Group, 1990, p. 60). In considering and implementing activities, staff agree that "To make this happen, universities will have to take schools seriously and treat them with respect, and they will have to take a close look at their own values" (Holmes Group, 1990, p. 60).

In addressing all the National Education Goals, local schools may need to look for external expertise and new solutions. Much assistance can be offered by collaborating with colleges of teacher education that have much to gain from an increased number of better prepared high school graduates. True partnerships can help schools address current problems such as improving school climates for learning and upgrading skills in teaching the core subjects and thinking skills, and they can lead to an increased pool of teacher education candidates as positive, interdependent relationships are formed.

These are the critical considerations of C & S program staff and their program advisory committee as they implement activities focused on college-school partnerships in which higher educators and local school personnel engage in designing and implementing innovations to improve professional preparation and school effectiveness. Specifically, work of the C & S program is directed to achieve two objectives:

> Objective #1: To provide information about, and access to, innovative materials and procedures for improving education at all levels to an increasing number of faculty in state ACTE-member institutions.
>
> Objective #2: To foster the creation of college-school partnerships that are devoted to improving the quality of preservice professional preparation and/or the quality of education provided by local schools.

Key Procedures Employed

C & S program staff work closely with the state affiliates of the AACTE to reach and assist individual faculty members, the college faculties they represent, the state affiliates with whom they associate, and the K-12 schools and teachers they seek to assist. Three major procedures, described below, are employed to inform and assist teacher educators and those with whom they work.

"Seed money" or modest grants are made available to teacher educators who, working in collaboration with one or more local schools or school systems, seek to improve: teacher preparation, inservice teacher training, and/or school performance. Applications may be made for planning grants (up to $1,000) or project grants (up to $3,000). Two competitive rounds of funding are conducted annually with Minigrant project announcements distributed in January and July followed by deadlines for receipt of applications in March and September. Program staff disseminate the grant availability announcement with sample cover sheets in bulk to the 115 C & S program institutional contact persons in AACTE-affiliated colleges and universities throughout the Region. Applicants may obtain upon request a copy of the criteria used to rate planning and/or project applications.

Three members of the Minigrant Review Panel (three teacher educators from each state nominated by the program advisory committee members) read and rate each application. No reviewer rates an application from his or her state. Each application is also rated by a member of the program advisory committee, and C & S staff read all applications. Following rating and ranking by the Minigrant Review Panel, program advisory committee members use all ratings to determine applications to be funded and funding levels. Both the Minigrant Review Panel and program advisory committee are trained by AEL staff in the review process. Contracts are then awarded to each planning or project grant recipient. Staff provide guidelines for final report development before the due date for each Minigrant's 10-20 page final report and submission of financial report. Each final report is submitted to AEL's Product Quality Assurance Process before being published. The Minigrant activity is evaluated annually by the program advisory committee who consider the number, distribution, and quality of proposals and final reports received.

One problem of all the Region's state ACTEs is that they are operated completely by volunteers. As the associations select officers each year or two years, the "headquarters" of the associations shift from one member institution to another, sometimes creating dysfunctional periods of inaction. To overcome such problems and routinize each association's role with respect to its joint activities with the C & S program, each state ACTE is asked to create a committee of five members to work with this AEL program. The second procedure employed by the program to achieve the above objectives involves convening these committees at an annual working conference. The conference provides an opportunity for updates on current problems facing each state's teacher education institutions, planning time for each state's affiliate leaders, exchange of information on current affiliate actions, training in areas of common need, and dialogue on collaborative initiatives with or without C & S assistance. Each annual conference concludes with participant evaluation of the program, format, setting, and organization. C & S staff and the program advisory committee use these data to evaluate the activity and prepare for the next conference. An annual survey of AEL-state ACTE committee members conducted during the second quarter assists in conference scheduling and planning.

Toward the accomplishment of program objective number 1, the program undertakes three dissemination efforts. Each of the 115 institutional contacts established at Regional ACTE colleges and universities during the 1985-90 funding cycle annually specifies the number of copies of AEL products they will disseminate to colleagues through the institutions' internal mail service. These products include: the quarterly issue of AEL's newsletter, The Link with the state affiliate's wraparound newsletter (in Kentucky, Virginia, and West Virginia) and the program-developed "Dialogue" insert; copies of recent Minigrant final reports; and AEL's "R & D Notes," 10-15 one-page abstracts describing new R & D reports or other products available at cost from the Regional Labs or other participating R & D producers. An annual Readership Survey distributed in the third quarter issue of "Dialogue" provides reader evaluation data on this insert and on The Link. Each Minigrant final report is disseminated with an evaluation survey that readers are asked to return to AEL. The program's 115 institutional contacts are surveyed annually during the first quarter to determine their interest in continuing as program contacts and any changes in the number of materials requested.

Major Accomplishments by Activity

Activity 1: Minigrants. For each of the two Minigrant competitions of FY 91, program staff provided more than 1,041 copies of the announcement/cover sheet to the 115 institutional contacts established in colleges and universities throughout the Region. These important resource persons to ACTE faculties distributed the announcements and provided access to evaluation criteria to applicants upon request as did program staff. As a result of this collaborative announcement effort, 29 applications were received from teacher educators for the spring 1991 competition (deadline March 30) and 52 applications were submitted prior to the September 30 deadline for the fall competition.

Following the reviews associated with each competition (discussed above), eight projects (three planning and five project grants) were funded for the spring cycle for a total of $15,585.20, and nine projects (three planning and six project grants) were selected for fall cycle funding for a total of $19,305.00. The special consideration announced for the spring and fall 1991 competitions, and subsequently given by Minigrant Reviewers, toward applications addressing the needs of at-risk students was apparent in the titles of planning and project grants funded. Descriptions of funded project purposes provided in the summer and winter 1991 issues of "Dialogue," the program's insert to The Link, included the following:

- planning for a project, based on the whole-language philosophy, to narrow the achievement gaps among upper, middle, and lower socioeconomic status students;
- planning for a mentoring and recruitment program that will attract persons of color to careers in teacher education;
- a project to provide skills and practice to enable teachers to create developmentally appropriate learning environments for all children;
- a project to evaluate the effectiveness of resource consultation as a training model for pairing school staff to best serve at-risk gifted learners;
- planning a summer remediation program involving student teachers and parents in assistance to at-risk kindergarten and first grade students from seven schools;
- a project to improve integrated regular class reading and writing instruction of students with moderate intellectual disabilities through development of an integrated curriculum and acquisition of appropriate materials; and
- a project to develop a multicultural curriculum unit and conduct a series of inservice workshops for ten rural middle school teachers whose instruction will then be observed and who will critique the unit and process.

Fifteen teacher educators, including the four program advisory committee members, were trained as Minigrant Reviewers during October 1991. The training session was rated highly by all participants who praised the presentations and discussions led by staff and the training manual as most useful and suggested that more time for the training and independent rating that followed would be helpful. Program staff expect reviewer and PAC member assistance to continue for each competition of the current AEL funding cycle.

Since timelines for most FY 91 funded Minigrants extended into the fourth quarter and all Minigrant reports from the 1985-90 AEL funding cycle that were received by the November 1990 deadline have been edited and published, no new Minigrant final reports were received and edited for publication during FY 91. The former C & S program staff (current staff assumed leadership in July 1991) chose not to publish those received after the deadline. Program advisory committee members approved the fourth-quarter FY 91-developed Guidelines for C & S Minigrant Final Report, which will be disseminated during first quarter FY 92 to all FY 91 projects having completed timelines and to those completing during FY 92. C & S staff submitted and were notified of acceptance for a paper presentation at the 1992 Annual Meeting of AACTE on the extent of enduring collaboration between college and school partners who received FY 85-spring 91 Minigrants. A survey following up the partners and progress of each effort will be conducted in December 1991.

Activity 2: Annual working conference. Eleven representatives from the ACTE state affiliates, three program advisory committee members, four presenters, and two staff participated in the November 2-3, 1991, annual working conference held in Roanoke, VA. In addition to meeting as state affiliate groups, these association leaders participated in presentations by four National Diffusion Network (NDN) facilitators and adopters on "Effective Use of Time" and "Learning to Teach in Inner-City Schools," two NDN projects with higher education involvement. Penny Earley, senior director of AACTE, also presented perspectives on America 2000 and conducted a workshop on knowing and influencing the publics of teacher education. Participants were pleased with the conference and rated high the presenters, conference coordination, and the opportunity to meet with state affiliates. In addition, they suggested that more time was needed for this type of conference. Major decisions resulting included the decision by all state affiliates to collaborate with AEL and AACTE on the development of a position statement on children and youth with suggestions for improving teacher education curriculum and policy recommendations. Meetings of ACTE-nominated members of this working group will be identified and convened in the first quarter FY 92.

Activity 3: Dissemination. C & S staff published four quarterly issues of "Dialogue," the program's insert to The Link in FY 91. The 115 teacher educators who serve as C & S program institutional contacts received copies of The Link and their state's wraparound newsletter to disseminate to colleagues. Copies requested by contacts increased from 303 for the first quarter to 358 for the fourth quarter. Circulation by state for the fourth quarter was as follows: Kentucky—76, Tennessee-72, Virginia-70, West Virginia-65, and other-75. Editors of the three state affiliate newsletters included as wraparounds to The Link published the following issues: Kentucky-four, Tennessee-separate newsletter not published by AEL, Virginia-four, and West Virginia-three. The institutional contacts also received "R & D Notes" approximately three times per quarter. The quality of the insert and "R & D Notes" was evaluated by a survey conducted by AEL's external evaluator, Western Michigan University, who will publish results during the first quarter FY 92.

Program staff also included a "Dialogue Readership Survey" in the third quarter issue of the insert that was disseminated within The Link in September 1991. The following summarizes the analysis of returned survey responses. Twenty-one surveys were returned. The survey consisted of four items asking respondents to rate selected characteristics of "Dialogue"; an item asking respondents to rate the overall quality of The Link; an item asking respondents with how many people they shared The Link; an item asking respondents if they would be willing to contribute an article for the insert, and if so, on what topic, and four open-ended items asking respondents how they used information from "Dialogue," what they like most, what recommendations they had for improving the insert, and what topics, materials, or programs they would like to see in future issues of "Dialogue."

The four items related to "Dialogue" characteristics asked respondents to rate each characteristic on a 1 to 6 scale, where 1 was the lowest rating and 6 was the highest rating. The highest rated item was "Dialogue" readability ($\bar{X}$-5.6). The second highest rating was "timeliness of content" ($\bar{X}$-5.2). Third was "Dialogue" usefulness of content ($\bar{X}$-4.9) and fourth was relevance of content to your role in education ($\bar{X}$-4.6). Respondents reported sharing their copies of The Link with an average of five other people. The overall quality of The Link was rated at 5.6 on the 1 to 6 point scale. Clearly, this respondent group holds very positive opinions about The Link and the "Dialogue" insert.

Respondents were asked if they would be willing to contribute an article for the "Dialogue" insert. Sixty-two percent indicated they would be willing to contribute.

Respondents were asked: What are some of the ways you used information from articles in the insert? Respondents reported a variety of uses of information from "Dialogue." Many of these related to using the insert to keep current on research findings and sharing information with other colleagues. Some respondents indicated the information from "Dialogue" was used in classes as reference and/or discussion material. It is clear that "Dialogue" information is used in a variety of ways to inform educators and their students on many current and important topics.

When respondents were asked what they liked about the insert, many of them cited the timeliness or currency of the information provided and the condensed format. Other responses were: opportunity to respond, well written, relationships to the AEL service Region, and for research and grant support resource identification.

When asked for recommendations for improving the "Dialogue" insert, most of those providing a response indicated satisfaction with the insert. A few suggestions for different print formats or color were made. One respondent indicated an interest in more articles on special education and another indicated that he/she thought there was somewhat of an imbalance in AEL state program representation in favor of Virginia and West Virginia.

A wide variety of topics, materials, and programs were indicated in response to the item that asked what articles readers would like to see in future issues. Included were: teacher preparation and beginning teacher assistance, collaborative research, special education, nongraded or multiage teaching, secondary education, adult education, postsecondary education, AEL's QUILT program, school and business collaboration, unique programs in elementary schools, and linkage of theory and practice. In summary, these respondents have very positive opinions about the "Dialogue" insert and they find it informative, current, and concise.

Awareness sessions/involvement in state ACTE affiliate conferences is another important method used to increased C & S collaboration with the Region's teacher education institutions. C & S staff presented program activity overviews at the VACTE conference (50 packets to participants) on September 30 in Virginia Beach, VA, and at the WVACTE conference (20 packets to participants) on October 14 in Canaan Valley, WV. Dorothy Jenkins, C & S program advisory committee member, presented an AEL update and distributed 100 packets of program information on October 31 at the TACTE conference in Nashville, TN.

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State Policy Program

The State Policy program is one of two programmatic activities carried out by AEL to accomplish both OERI's Task 2, Assist Efforts to Improve Educational Outcomes, Especially for At-Risk Students; and Task 3, Conduct Applied Research and Development. This section offers information about the rationale, procedures, and accomplishments of the State Policy program during FY 91.

Rationale for Program

AEL's work with state policymakers is conducted through a single program at the Laboratory. Established in 1985 as the Policy and Planning Center, it was renamed the State Policy program this past year. The program's principal audience traditionally has been the Region's Chief State School Officers, but services are also provided to governors' staff, house and senate education committee chairs, and state board members. On occasion, program services also reach other decisionmakers--individuals who do not, strictly speaking, make policies, but who implement policies at relatively senior levels.

The services of the program are designed to help state education policymakers gain access to information they need for decisionmaking. Since the 1983 release of A Nation at Risk, education policymaking at the state level has increased tremendously. While major education policies emanated from federal and local officials prior to 1983, state legislators, governors, and state department of education leaders dominate the education policymaking arena today. Evidence of this shift of policy decisions to the state level is seen across AEL's four member states. The need for information on the part of the variety of audiences served by the program is recognized across the Region as well. This recognition was documented in AEL's 1989 needs assessment, when the statement, "to ensure that education policy is informed by the outcomes of education research and development," was given a "high" ranking for the Region.

Key Procedures Employed

The services of the program are designed to increase policymakers' use of information in their decisionmaking. Services are grounded in the belief that increased access to information leads to better education policymaking. The program, therefore, uses two primary strategies for sharing information: convening groups of policymakers within one state or across states for one-on-one, small-group, high-level discussion of critical issues of interest; and publishing policy-oriented information resources that present current thinking and practice in areas identified as especially timely to the Region.

Over the life of the program, we have come to recognize and respect the high degree of flexibility in structure and process required to serve the needs of state-level policymakers. Services delivered under both of the primary strategies, therefore, are designed to offer several format options, and the topics they address are identified as the services are needed. The locus of the identification of topics has been a strength of the program. All the program's work is focused on issues identified by members of its advisory committee--the Region's Chief State School Officers and one representative of each. This direct involvement of the program's primary constituency enables its services to be timely and on target. This means that the limited resources available to serve policymakers' needs are maximized; services delivered are wanted and focused on immediate needs of the client.

The FY 91 program plan calls for the program to undertake five activities--the first four as Task 2 efforts, the fifth as a Task 3 R & D project:

- Activity 1: Policy Seminars. Small groups of state decisionmakers from one state or across states will be convened to discuss, focus attention upon, and stimulate solutions to pressing education issues.
- Activity 2: Policy Support Roundtable. As a strategy for strengthening in-state sources of information available to and used by the program's primary audience--state-level policymakers--key staff to governors, legislators, and Chief State School Officers will be convened by the program to broaden the base of resources available to them in their work.
- Activity 3: Policy Information Resources. Policy-related syntheses will be produced and disseminated by the program in three formats: (1) issue papers, (2) policy briefs, and (3) issue packets.
- Activity 4: Kentucky Brokering Services. Special brokering services will be provided to the Kentucky Department of Education as it implements the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990.
- Activity 5: Kentucky Policy Study. A long-term, qualitative research study will document the effects of the Kentucky education reform legislation on selected small, rural districts.

Major Accomplishments by Type or Activity

Activity 1: Policy Seminars. Since 1985, the State Policy program has been convening small groups of state decisionmakers to discuss, focus attention upon, and stimulate solutions to pressing education issues of the Region. Sometimes the meetings involve key decisionmakers from only one state; at other times, policymakers from all four states meet in a regional event. The meetings are planned with a high level of involvement from the program's advisory committee members, who also are invited to attend the events. The FY 91 program plan proposed one regional and two in-state Policy Seminars.

The requirement for the first of the in-state seminars was met in the spring, when State Policy staff coordinated the participation of representatives from AEL's member states in the regional meetings of the National Education Goals Panel. The Regional Educational Labs were asked by OERI to take on this task. No meetings were held in AEL's Region, but representatives from its states were invited to one of three other meetings in other Lab regions. Participants from two states--Kentucky and West Virginia--attended the April 25 meeting in Columbus, coordinated by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. State Policy staff were in frequent contact with the departments of education in both states to offer AEL assistance and to coordinate information sharing. AEL staff attended the Columbus meeting as well. Representatives from Virginia were participants in the May 3 Goals Panel meeting in Annapolis. Research for Better Schools (RBS) staff contacted AEL's State Policy staff, who facilitated the initial contact by RBS with Virginia's Secretary of Education James Dyke. Tennesseeans were assigned to the May 17 meeting in Little Rock, coordinated by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL). For this event, AEL worked with our Tennessee contacts to identify appropriate invitees and then provided mailing labels to SEDL for the 200 invited Tennessee representatives. The level of work associated with responding to this OERI request more than equaled what would have been required to plan and organize an in-state event.

The requirement for the second of the in-state seminars was met in the third quarter, when State Policy staff were asked by the Secretary's Regional Representative in Philadelphia to assist in the preparation and presentation of the August 12-13 Region 3/CSSO Retreat in Rehoboth Beach, DE. For the second year now, AEL and RBS collaborated to prepare materials to support the discussions at the meeting. New forms of assessment and the restructuring of state departments of education were the two issues featured at the retreat.

The requirement for the regional Policy Seminar was met during the fourth quarter. On November 10-12, AEL's State Policy program, the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE), and the Danforth Foundation sponsored a regional seminar on systemic education reform. Approximately 80 participants engaged in large- and small-group discussions of issues related to developing a strong state-level policy system that allows for local initiative and creativity. The event was truly collaborative. Danforth supported the costs of lodging, meals, and conference expenses; CPRE took the lead in organizing the event and securing most speakers; and AEL pulled together a regional planning group to advise CPRE, coordinated invitation followup, supported participants' travel expenses, and facilitated the state meeting of participants held during the seminar. A post-event assessment is not yet complete. Evaluation data from the event will be reported in the FY 92 first-quarter report.

Activity 2: Policy Support Roundtable. Policymakers are busy people with frequent demands on their time. Unfortunately, few opportunities exist for in-depth study and investigation of every issue before them. They come to rely on staff to draft position statements and briefings on education initiatives within the state.

As important as these education staff are, they frequently lack good information networks outside the state and have limited opportunities for professional development experiences--experiences where colleagues come together to share what's happening in their own work, to learn about others' experiences with issues similar to theirs, to hear about emerging issues that soon they may face, and to establish personal contact with knowledgeable people who can later become part of their own information network.

Throughout the four states reside people who work as key staff to governors, legislators, and Chief State School Officers. The State Policy program proposes to organize a network of these people and to convene them at least annually to increase their use of each other and of AEL as resources for information. Our goal is to strengthen information sources available to and used by state policymakers--the program's primary clients.

During the first year of the contract, some initial work was begun to identify the people in each of the states who likely would be involved in the roundtable. State Policy staff met with various legislative staff in Virginia and Kentucky during other meetings in those states. West Virginia legislative and gubernatorial staff are known to and frequently consulted by AEL staff. Tennessee appears to staff its legislative education committees different from the other states. Access to these people, however, appears not to be a problem. The chairman of the House education committee in Tennessee sits on AEL's Board of Directors and is easily accessible to staff. In addition, the vice chairman only recently completed a term on the Board.

The AEL/CPRE/Danforth regional seminar presented an excellent opportunity for AEL to involve the people who work as key staff to governors, legislators, and Chief State School Officers in a timely discussion of education reform initiatives. These people, then, were included among the list of invitees to the event. Representatives of this group attended from each state.

Activity 3: Policy Information Resources. Although the program emphasizes face-to-face interactions with policymakers, it tries not to neglect a wider circle of education decisionmakers. The program produces syntheses of current thinking and practice in three different formats: issue papers, policy briefs, and issue packets.

The program is producing two issue papers in FY 91. Both are on the topic of restructuring state departments of education, a major area of interest in the Region that cuts across several program areas (a focus of the Region 3/CSSO retreat; the subject of the two issue papers; and the topic of one issue packet, described below). The two papers represent separate chronologies and analyses of the restructuring of the departments in both Kentucky and Virginia. The two states' restructuring strategies differ in impetus, purpose, result, and effect. The two papers will document and report to the Region and the nation the move to change the function and operation of state education bureaucracies in these two states.

"Policy Briefs"--the second of the program's three synthesis formats--is published four times annually. Each issue gives a policy-related discussion of a national concern that has regional implications. "Policy Briefs" was created as an insert to The Link. It now is published separately and mailed to about 800 policymakers and others throughout the Region. The four issues of FY 91 focused on ungraded primary, the 1990 NAEP results in mathematics achievement, the change process, and systemic reform.

Issue packets represent a new information resource format produced by the program. The idea for pulling together a small number of some of the best pieces available on a topic and distributing them to the program's advisory committee, and perhaps a limited number of other key policymakers in the Region, was first tried late in FY 90. Three packets were promised in FY 91. The first one produced was related to the state department restructuring work. Staff surveyed the AEL states and identified restructuring efforts underway in Kentucky, Virginia, and West Virginia. Staff requested information on those activities from each state, and internal documents from all three states were a major part of the packet. In addition, each state's section of the packet was supplemented with any state department publication or local newspaper account of the restructuring activity. Clippings from national education publications that described restructuring efforts across the nation were included as well. Staff have continued to add to and update the packet as new information becomes available.

The requirement for a second issue packet was met by the program's dissemination of the EDTALK packet of materials, developed as a collaborative effort between the Council for Educational Development and Research (CEDaR) and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The packet's release coincided with announcement of the 1990 National Assessment of Educational Progress mathematics results. The materials were designed to provide research-based information to educators and policymakers who are called upon to explain and interpret the results of the newly released data. Twenty-five complete packets were provided to each Laboratory as part of the CEDaR-NCES project. These 25 were distributed to the state department of education mathematics consultants in each AEL member state. State consultants were also provided camera-ready masters of the complete packet so they could disseminate multiple copies of the materials in their states.

Dissemination of the packet reached well beyond this initial 25. Packets were also made available through a special announcement in the second-quarter issue of The Link, to AEL Board members, and to other AEL program directors who disseminated them to their clients. For example, the School Governance and Administration program sent copies to LEAD directors and school board association officers, while the Rural Excel program shared them with contacts at the Center of Excellence for Science and Mathematics Education at the University of Tennessee, Martin--partners with the program in AEL's Tennessee mathematics project.

These dissemination efforts resulted in distribution of more than 225 packets throughout the Region. The State Policy program turned the masters over to the Laboratory's Resource Center, which now responds to orders by either providing one master copy or multiple copies of the packet at cost.

Availability of the packet again was mentioned in the fourth-quarter issue of The Link--a special issue on math and science. This time readers were encouraged to order a copy of the packet from AEL's Resource Center.

The program's requirement for the third--and final--issue packet for FY 91 was produced during the fourth quarter on the topic of state accountability systems.

Activity 4: Kentucky Brokering Service. The purpose of the brokering service is to aid in the implementation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA). The belief is that Kentucky Department of Education officials will need to know about specific sites around the country where particular practices like those specified by the reform are in operation. The idea for the service grew out of a meeting with department officials soon after the act was passed and was proposed by AEL in its program plan for FY 91-95, which began December 1, 1990.

Kentucky's new commissioner of education was hired on January 1, 1991. The State Policy director and the deputy executive director met with Commissioner Thomas Boysen in late March to familiarize him with AEL, its activities in Kentucky, and the proposed brokering service. Program staff had delayed implementation of the new service, since its operation had implications for the operation of the department. Staff felt that the new commissioner should have some discretion in shaping the best use of AEL resources available to help in the implementation of KERA. At the meeting, Commissioner Boysen expressed his desire to put implementation of the brokering service on hold until the reorganization of the department, slated to begin on July 1. At a followup meeting with Commissioner Boysen, implementation of the brokering service will be discussed.

Activity 5: Kentucky Policy Study. AEL's policy study in four rural Kentucky school districts is designed to collect in-depth information about the implementation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA); to analyze ways local rural schools are affected by and respond to large-scale changes in state policy; to report policy-relevant information to policymakers, educators, and scholars about the consequences of the reform's implementation; and to generate a primarily qualitative knowledge base that can be accessed by other researchers.

AEL's technical proposal for operation of the Regional Educational Laboratory contract, submitted on June 18, 1990, describes a project to study the implementation of KERA in one rural school district. The supplemental to that proposal, submitted on September 13, 1990, expanded the project by adding one staff member, thereby making it possible to study additional districts.

The policy effects study builds on baseline research undertaken as a special project of AEL's Rural, Small Schools program in the final quarter of FY 90. The current study is concentrating on five critical aspects of the KERA legislation: the nongraded primary program, curriculum changes in grades 4-12, shifts of authority within school districts as school governance is decentralized, family resource centers and youth services centers (social service centers associated with schools that have at least 20 percent low-income students), and finance.

Two staff members, both trained in ethnographic research techniques, are carrying out the study. Three of the study districts are county districts--one each in western, eastern, and central Kentucky. The fourth district is a small, independent district in the county seat of a rural county. Each researcher takes primary responsibility for studying two districts. They visit each of their districts two or three times a month to collect data, primarily through structured interviews and participant observation.

A major part of the first year's work was in gaining entree to the school districts. In March, staff approached four of the six districts studied in the fall to seek their participation in the longer term investigation of KERA implementation. The identity of the districts is being kept confidential. The pseudonyms of the districts approached are Lamont County, Central County, Orange County, and Newtown Independent District. By the end of May, staff had secured participation from the school boards of Lamont County, Orange County, and Newtown Independent. The superintendent of Central County declined to participate in the study, feeling that the district was so overburdened with meeting KERA mandates that it was currently unable to undertake anything more.

Because Central County was not to be part of the study, staff approached the superintendent of Humphrey County, one of the remaining two districts studied in the fall. The superintendent agreed to continue in the study until a suitable central Kentucky district could be located during the summer of 1991.

Staff identified three new central Kentucky school districts for possible participation in the long-term study and visited these districts in early June. On the basis of conversations with the superintendents and key administrative staff in the districts, Vanderbilt County (a pseudonym) was asked to join the study. The Vanderbilt County school board agreed in July to participate, and the researcher has been conducting field work in the district since that time. In addition, staff have continued to maintain telephone contact with the Humphrey County district since the end of the spring.

Entree has been solidified in the other three districts through continuing field work. In addition to conducting structured interviews and attending key meetings, staff have been conducting orientation sessions for teachers in the four districts currently in the study, to familiarize them with AEL's R & D resources.

Built into the study's research design is an annual meeting of a Peer Review Panel, which provides the staff with feedback on the study design and provides the perspective of the national education reform research community. Distinguished members of the panel include Fred Hess of the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance; Beth Goldstein of the University of Kentucky; and Susan Fuhrman of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, Rutgers University. The panel will meet once each year to advise AEL staff on research design and implementation.

The panel first met in Lexington, KY, on August 6, 1991. At that time, members helped AEL staff set priorities for the study, and recommended that staff develop research questions focused specifically on the provisions of KERA in the priority areas. The following research questions were developed for the entire five-year study:

(1) Primary program (nongraded): Is the mandated, statewide, nongraded primary program effectively implemented in the four study districts in a manner that (a) eliminates the stigma of early school failure; (b) allows students to move through the primary program at their own pace, working in heterogeneous groups of multiage, multiability students; and (c) promotes student acquisition of the capabilities set forth in KERA, and of the skills required to move on to fourth grade?

(2) Family resource centers/youth services centers: Do the family resource centers and youth services centers established in the four districts effectively (a) identify students and families in need of social and health services to overcome barriers to school performance, and (b) promote coordination of services by community agencies an the schools in ways that link economically disadvantaged students and their families with available social and health services and that promote the development of services that are needed but not currently available in the community?

(3) Governance/authority structure: Has the authority structure in the four districts changed so that (a) the state department of education operates in a facilitating rather than supervisory capacity; (b) administrators, teachers, and parents at local

schools, working through school councils and committees, make and implement policy and personnel decisions that promote improved student performance; (c) local school boards set district policies that promote improved student performance and support administrative and local school efforts to improve student performance; and (d) the superintendent and central office administration implement policies set forth by the school board and support policy and personnel decisions of school councils?

(4) Instructional changes in grades 4-12: What changes occur in instruction, assessment, and school functioning in grades 4-12 that are designed to assist students in acquiring the capabilities and goals defined by KERA, and what indicators are there that the strategies are likely to be effective?

(5) Funding: Is funding under the SEEK formula adequate to fund the programs mandated by KERA, and identified and developed by the school board, superintendents, administrators, and local schools as necessary to assist students in acquiring the capabilities and goals defined by KERA?

For each of the research questions, staff also will analyze how the desired effect was achieved or why it was not achieved, what accounts for variation among the districts in their ability to implement these aspects of KERA as intended, and how much of what occurred in the district relative to these five areas can be attributed to KERA.

Dissemination activities also have captured staff's energies in this first year of the study. The dissemination needs of the study have proved to be greater than anticipated. The researchers are asked frequently to address groups of policymakers and educators in Kentucky. They were invited to appear before a subcommittee of the Education Committee of the Kentucky legislature on November 14, 1991, to discuss their findings; they are disseminating a quarterly research digest to a state and national audience (two have been produced thus far); and they intend to issue a short annual report each year, as well as at least one scholarly article for publication in a journal.

This year the report of the fall study, Initial Reactions to the Kentucky Education Reform Act in Six Rural School Districts, was disseminated to all persons who were interviewed for that study, all members of the state legislature's education committees, a mailing list of teacher educators and researchers in higher education, professional organization staff, staff of advocacy groups in Kentucky, staff of the state department of education, and Labs and Centers around the country. Finally, staff have prepared and submitted a chapter for a book of case studies on school district restructuring, as studied by qualitative and ethnographic researchers, set for publication in the spring of 1992.

Community Liaison to Urban Education Program

The Community Liaison to Urban Education (CLUE) program is one of seven programmatic activities carried out by AEL to accomplish OERI's Task 2, Assist Efforts to Improve Educational Outcomes, Especially For At-Risk Students. This section offers information about the rationale, procedures, and accomplishments of the CLUE program during FY 91.

Program Rationale

The CLUE program is designed to initiate and sustain active involvement of minority and nonadvantaged parents, community leaders, and community organizations in projects, activities, and events that build skills in areas that are key to educational success for large numbers of at-risk children and youth within the Region.

National, regional, state, and local efforts to restructure America's educational systems call for substantive changes across the board. Many significant educational movements--new federal initiatives, school reform, restructuring, site-based management--will require new response patterns from school personnel. At the same time, the large number of potentially at-risk students (predicted to soon constitute a majority in the school population), coupled with the longstanding problems of educating these students, map out a very complex set of issues and needs that must be addressed (Oakes, 1987; Ogbu, 1986; Persell, 1977). There are newly mandated requirements to involve parents in federal initiatives for Chapter 1 programs. There is a clear signal in site-based management and decisionmaking school reform models of the need to secure support from community members. Research indicates that new and more effective ways of interacting directly with high-risk communities, parents, and their children will be required to carry out these mandates (Crandall, 1982; James, 1988; Kochman, 1981; Pallas, 1989; Trist, 1983).

The overall rationale for creating a grassroots and community approach to educational improvement for at-risk students is twofold: (1) validated evidence indicates that programs and activities designed for school improvement will have more impact when relationships with high-risk parents and communities are based on informed stakeholders, mutual goals, understanding, and trust; and (2) the data also conclude that programs nurtured and grounded in a working knowledge of the complex dynamics of minority and nonadvantaged family/community subsystems will have a better chance of being successful.

Staff work continued to verify that the success of a school's efforts to educate its student population was predicated upon the educational acumen, cooperation, and support of its parents and the general community (Epstein, 1987; Epstein and Becker, 1982; Gotts & Purnell, 1986; Rich, 1988). Those students most in danger of failing to negotiate school live with parents and within communities where there is little, if any, ongoing involvement of adults in the overall educational processes occurring for students in that school system. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that educational improvement efforts in these instances must come about from direct and substantive work with parents and community members (James, 1988; Wilson, 1982). Three basic objectives guided efforts to actively involve parents, community members, and relevant organizations in collaborative events that could produce information about new and/or effective strategies for impacting the educational environment of at-risk students. Further, those selected educational improvement initiatives were implemented in a community-based site for demonstration purposes.

Key Procedures

CLUE's program objectives and activities have an interrelated structure that ensured that informational services, technical assistance, training, and educational improvement activities were provided to minority and nonadvantaged groups of underrepresented educational stakeholders. It was expected that these groups would increase their knowledge of research-based educational programs and practices, and with technical assistance, they would be able to use that newly acquired knowledge to leverage their resources through collaborative/cooperative involvement with other groups.

Staff employed several key procedures to accomplish these goals and tasks. First, specialized training packages, client-oriented syntheses of research and development materials, and preassembled packets that addressed expressed needs on emerging trends, issues, and promising practices were prepared and disseminated. The impact of this key strategy is exemplified by expressed client satisfaction in terms of their readiness to accept and utilize the research materials. For example, the Tennessee Black Legislative Caucus requested data on the educational status of Black males in the United States. Client recognition of such names as John Hope Franklin, Samuel Myers, and Lerone Bennett Jr., as Black scholars, appears to have increased probability that the statistics would be respected without reference to biased intent of the researcher. Routinely, staff also disseminated materials from AEL's other programs and centers upon request.

Another key procedure employed was convening groups to conduct needs sensing, and to provide information, training, and/or technical assistance. This process took two forms. CLUE staff collaborated with other groups and agencies to create forums for formal presentations on at-risk issues and trends and to provide access for CLUE's clients to major national, regional, state, and local conferences. This strategy leveraged staff's capacity to expand their audiences and, at the same time, provide a broader array of experts and high-quality programs to parents and community leaders by forming partnerships with other organizations. On the other hand, staff developed targeted materials and convened their own workshops and organized major conferences to provide opportunities and access to key knowledge more specifically attuned to the cultural and local community needs of the group(s).

Given a community of children and students where sociological and economic factors (e.g., race, poverty, socioeconomic status, identity, etc.) are distributed equally, working directly with the family and community becomes a critical component in the educational improvement equation. Consequently, a major, and perhaps more direct procedure was the arrangement of a series of informational and training activities in a select community that were designed to culminate in an ongoing, long-term demonstration site that included community members and parents and the school as equal partners.

The basic principles that guided this process had been culled from prior collaborative activities designed to work directly with high-risk communities. Embedded in these educational improvement activities were continuous informal discussions and reassessments of the outcomes. This formative process was carried out in a manner such that adjustments could be made in the method or technique employed to accomplish some goal or mission. The ongoing notetaking and tape recording of the outcomes of implementation activities at this demonstration site served as the basis for validating those processes and procedures that could identify how best to nurture parent and community relations in extremely high-risk communities.

Major Accomplishments

The CLUE program objectives are an outgrowth of the Lab's overall goals and were designed to meet the needs in the Region and the particular needs of CLUE's primary audience--minority and nonadvantaged groups of underrepresented individuals.

The objectives and activities were structured to ensure baseline capability of developing new materials and/or information; to ensure hands-on access to the materials and resources; to enable individuals to utilize the materials and information; to increase not only the size of the audience but also the range of information disseminated; and to implement select strategies and techniques of educational improvement at a community-based site.

The following accomplishments are the results of the conduct of carefully planned key procedures as described in the preceding section.

Activity 1: Preparing targeted products. In order to prepare targeted products for the minority and nonadvantaged populations, CLUE staff attended six major conferences to gauge the tone of national trends, issues, and practices that might impact CLUE's audiences. They were: (1) the Fifth National Conference on the Recruitment and Retention of Minorities in Higher Education; (2) the National Board For Professional Standards Forum, Louisville, KY; (3) the Children's Defense Fund Conference "What Works"; (4) an interactive teleconference entitled "From Campuses to Communities: Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the 21st Century"; (5) the Region II Advisory Group Task Force Public Hearing On Children, Youth, and Family; and (6) the 1991 National Urban League Conference.

CLUE staff collaborated with organizations, e.g., the West Tennessee African-American Affairs Council, in developing a first-time document that included biographies and pictures of all of the African-American politicians in the Tennessee State Legislature. The document has been used in multicultural education classes and public presentations. Additionally, the office of Multicultural Affairs at Marshall University (WV); the Humanities Council of West Virginia; the Alliance For the Collection, Preservation, and Dissemination of West Virginia Black History; and CLUE staff collaborated to generate, transcribe, produce, and copy the proceedings of two annual Black history conferences held in Huntington, WV. The West Virginia Humanities Foundation provided the CLUE program with $1,500 to defray the cost of reproducing the results of this three-year collaborative research and oral history effort. Staff conducted a national search for documentation of programs designed for all male African-American schools, and articles written by African-American scholars addressing issues of the educational status of Black males. After the conference committee members of the Tennessee Black Caucus Annual Retreat in Knoxville, TN, selected the appropriate articles, staff reproduced and disseminated 200 copies of the document at the educational forum.

The CLUE director developed the following workshop and seminar packets that were an outgrowth of efforts to create language and culturally sensitive training materials:

- Designer Drugs: The Doorway to Death and Destruction,
- Parental Involvement: Collaboration as a Solution,
- Parenting: It Doesn't Have to be You Against Them,
- Community and Schools Together for Children,
- A Case Study in Productive Partnerships at Public Housing Units, and
- Parental Involvement: A Model for Working With and Through Minority Communities.

Program staff continued to work on culturally specific materials. The African-American children's stories, designed for bibliotherapeutic purposes, were completed and prototypes of the five main characters have been sketched and approved for inclusion in the stories. Further, the following content themes have been formatted for final products:

- Seven African-American Children's Stories; Language Arts Manual with five modules; Reading, Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Spelling; Tutoring Handbook; How to Conduct an Effective Meeting; and Making Cultural Diversity Work.

The materials will be placed in the field for trial, comment, and peer review.

Activity 2: Convening groups. CLUE's program director attends national, regional, state, and local meetings; collaborates and/or cooperates with community groups and formal minority organizations to convene meetings and conferences; and makes workshop/seminar presentations to provide information, technical assistance, and relevant training where appropriate.

Staff convened 15 specific meetings of parents, community leaders, and external community resource providers during the FY 91 and made formal presentations on strategies for building networks and collaborative partnerships. For example, formal presentations were made to parents and teachers at Mound Elementary School (Dunbar, WV), and to the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) of Spring Hill Elementary school (Huntington, WV) entitled "Improving School and Home Communications."

The CLUE director presented a workshop at the Portsmouth (VA) Public School's Leadership Institute using specialized materials entitled "Multicultural Education--Keeping Individual Differences Secure (KIDS)"; and also conducted a 20-county regional parent training conference (West Tennessee) at Dyersburg State Community College. Staff collaborated with the West Tennessee African-American Affairs Council to assemble 67 parents for the day and a half conference. Consultants conducted minisessions on personal growth and parenting skills. The CLUE director conducted a needs assessment for further planning with the parents.

In response to Senator Gerald Neal of Kentucky, CLUE staff supported 20 parents and five minority educators from West Virginia and the immediate Louisville area to attend a conference, "What Works in Educational Reform: An African-American Perspective," sponsored by the National Caucus Of Black State Legislators; the Kentucky Education Association; the universities of Louisville, Kentucky, and Kentucky State; and the Kentucky Education Reform: African-American Council. Other activities included six presentations of the Parent-Community-School model for working with high-risk communities to a total of 453 conferees and participants; and the cosponsorship of a Grant Writing Workshop on Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention at West Virginia State College on November 13-15, 1991. The CLUE program provided seven scholarships for community leaders from across the state to attend the three-day conference. The CLUE director conducted four minisessions on goal inferencing and needs assessment strategies for 72 conferees at that conference.

CLUE's director routinely participated in collaboratives that would not only ensure access of nonadvantaged parents and community leaders to forums of educational issues and trends, but would also provide a forum for the director to present the perspectives of nonadvantaged educational stakeholders to the professional educators and decisionmakers. A partnership with Regions Two and Three of the National Coalition of Title I/ Chapter 1 Parents enables CLUE staff to provide parents from each of AEL's states with access to the training opportunities conducted each year. Additionally, West Virginia Education Association's full-day conference on at-risk children in Charleston, WV, provided a similar experience.

On the other hand, the director has taken advantage of opportunities as keynoter or panelist to create an awareness among others of the special needs of the high-risk communities, parents, and students. Such presentations (400 conferees) included a formal presentation on "Restructuring Public Schools and Universities to Collaborate" and "The Impact of Nationwide Reform on The Recruitment and Retention of Minorities in Higher Education." Similarly, strategies and techniques for creating collaborative projects to improve the educational opportunities of nonadvantaged students were made to an audience of 350 (Clarksville, TN). The CLUE director was appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of Kentucky to serve on a committee to plan a statewide conference on multicultural education, presenting yet another opportunity to provide input.

Activity 3: Creating demonstration sites. CLUE staff worked approximately 12 months with the Education Subcommittee of The Black Leadership conference, the Kanawha County Schools, and the Resident's Council of the Orchard Manor Public Housing Complex to assess the possibility of creating an environment that would be conducive to the development of a demonstration site. Staff provided comprehensive technical assistance and support for the purpose of forming partnerships to implement educational improvement activities in that community.

Efforts to create the demonstration school site were focused primarily on community activities designed to empower residents, alleviate community problems, and establish legitimacy of community leaders. The newly formed Orchard Manor Resident Council, the Committee, and CLUE staff sponsored a community forum and dinner on February 26, 1991, for the purpose of organizing parents and community leaders to improve the education of the resident children and students. As a result of the 43 needs statements that were generated at the meeting, staff assisted the council members in writing and successfully competing for a $40,000 grant from the Housing and Urban Development agency. Council members then followed through on a longstanding effort to have city officials install a traffic light for increased safety for their children.

A gatehouse was requested by the community and installed by the city at both entrances of the complex to control traffic. Results are noteworthy in that drug traffiking, incidents of violence, and drug arrests have decreased markedly. Council members also report the upswing in the number of elderly residents now walking outdoors in the complex. The Housing and Urban Development agency, impressed with the short-term success, provided several training events for members of the council in preparation for a more complex level of responsibility. When it becomes feasible, the Orchard Manor Resident Council could become the managing unit for the housing complex. In providing technical assistance, committee members have also given help to the Council in writing a second grant to the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation for funds to purchase a set of World Encyclopedia for the library in Orchard Manor.

Media publicity about the changes occurring in the complex and the positive response to parents from the school board appear to have created a new and very positive attitude from the elementary school faculty and principal. This was best evidenced by the marked increase in the attendance of parents at PTA meetings. Attendance increased from five to 40 to 77 parents in three meeting periods.

Committee members met with Resident Council members and the principal of Chandler Elementary School on September 15, 1991, to discuss the first steps in officially naming the school and the Orchard Manor housing complex as the demonstration site. Attendant to this process will be the development of an evaluation process that is acceptable to all parties concerned and is appropriate for the improvement activity.

Activity 4: Dissemination of information. Staff prepare, produce, and disseminate information by request, and by need, to assist and advise clients through research syntheses, newspaper clips, and specialized booklets and packets.

In terms of simple distribution and notice of information, staff disseminated 1,200 copies of the August, September, October, and November volumes of the Orchard Manor Newsline; 5,000 flyers were disseminated announcing the change from the Regional Liaison Center to the Community Liaison to Urban Education; 8,500 mailing labels were distributed to the West Virginia Coalition For Literacy; and 1,160 mailing labels of superintendents in the Region were provided to the planning committees for the National Dropout Prevention Network conference in Tulsa, OK, in 1991 and for the 1992 conference in Pittsburgh, PA.

CLUE staff, as a result of cosponsoring two conferences in West Virginia (The Family Approach to Literacy and a Grant Writing Workshop on Drug and Alcohol Abuse), distributed 3,500 flyers announcing the conferences. Approximately 19,300 pieces of general information were disseminated throughout the Region.

Staff also produced and disseminated more complex types of information, e.g., three sets of 100 booklets for the state conferences of the National Association For The Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Each of the 300 booklets contained five articles and at least 30 newspaper clips (state-related) and represented more than 15,000 individual pieces of information. The document was titled "Newsworthy Issues in Education and Equal Rights." Similarly, the fourth annual Black History Conference was held at Marshall University in Huntington, WV, in September. CLUE staff produced 300 (400-page) history documents compiled from research and oral history presentations of historians to be readied for distribution to libraries, colleges/universities, and schools throughout West Virginia. Two hundred copies of a compilation of articles by national Black scholars on the educational status of African-American males were disseminated at the 17th Annual Tennessee Black Legislative Caucus Retreat held in Knoxville, TN, on November 6-10, 1991. Several state departments, having previously indicated an absence of the data, have asked that a copy of the final document be provided to their offices.

Staff prepared 35 workshop packets for a presentation on Responsible Community Leaders to the West Tennessee African-American Affairs Council. The director assembled and distributed 60 workshop packets during four minisessions on Needs Assessment and Writing Goals and Objectives at the Grant Writing workshop on November 14, 1991. Fifty sets of materials on testwiseness skills were prepared for a workshop conducted at the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority regional training meeting in Beckley, WV.

Products prepared and disseminated by staff reached CLUE audiences through workshops, seminars, national, regional, state, and local meetings. There was a total of 1,500 such documents. On the other hand, staff assembled, copied, and/or obtained permission to reprint professional articles and documents for inclusion in booklets and packets for CLUE activities. These professional articles and products totaled 440 pieces of information. Staff provided materials from AEL's other programs upon request and also when relevant to events sponsored by CLUE staff. Approximately 1,000 program descriptions, copies of The Link, and policy briefs have been disseminated along with CLUE materials.

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Rural, Small Schools Program

The Rural, Small Schools (RSS) program is one of two programmatic activities carried out by AEL to accomplish both OERI's Task 2, Assist Efforts to Improve Educational Outcomes, Especially for At-Risk Students; and Task 3, Conduct Applied Research and Development. This section offers information about the rationale, procedures, and accomplishments of the Rural, Small Schools program during FY 91.

Rationale for Program

Rural and small schools have always met challenges not typical of urban and suburban schools. Roads are often bad and population is sparce, so transportation claims a disproportionate share of operating expenses (Cubberley, 1922; Meehan, 1987). Low enrollment in secondary schools makes it expensive to offer a broad curriculum (Conant, 1959; Haller & Monk, 1988). Finally, the tax base available to support schools in rural areas is meager (Gaumitz, 1959; Honeyman, Thompson, & Wood, 1989).

Sparce and declining population, rough terrain and long distances, and diminishing economic activity are particularly noticeable in the Appalachian Region served by AEL. The lack of substantial industrial or financial institutions in the Region limits employment and keeps incomes low (Deavers & Brown, 1985; Tickamyer & Tickamyer, 1987). As a result, educational needs are both more extensive and more intensive in the AEL Region than in other areas of the country (Arends, 1987; Bagby, Arcury, Clement-Brutto, Eller, Graves, & Nash, 1988; Crew, Straus, & Carpenter, 1985; DeYoung, Huffman, & Turner, 1989; Martin, 1987; Reiman & Lovingood, 1989).

Research on the effects of closing and consolidating rural and small schools. The search for solutions to the dilemma of great educational need and inadequate resources in the Region has led to a sometimes desperate search for efficiency. The result has been that most districts have been consolidated into county units (359 of the 488 K-12 districts that existed in the AEL Region in 1987 were county districts).

The quest for greater efficiency continues, however. West Virginia policymakers, for example, are encouraging consolidation of schools within districts for the purpose of saving operating funds. In West Virginia, the School Building Authority (SBA) has set minimums on building enrollment for districts to qualify for capital support for much-needed maintenance and building projects. Consequently, districts wanting such support must submit a plan for school consolidation that meets SBA criteria. The wisdom of such action has been questioned. Valencia (1984), for example, reports that the savings generated by consolidation are generally negligible. Consolidation may be, as many critics assert, an old and now unwarranted strategy, devised for a time and for needs long since gone (Hobbs, 1989; Sher, 1986; Valencia, 1984).

A search of the literature found few research studies that measure the impact of rural school consolidation on school costs, curriculum offered, courses taken (and by whom), and educational outcomes. Consequently, a research project was identified by RSS staff under Task 3 to address this need. Available data at the state department of education in each state in the AEL Region would be used to study such issues as:

- the effectiveness of consolidation in achieving cost savings (i.e., realizing possible economies of scale);
- the differential effects of consolidation on students' academic achievement and affective behavior;
- the actual (rather than projected) effect of consolidation on course offerings; and
- the experiences of impoverished students (particularly, in the Region, students from "up the hollers") in local versus consolidated schools (Reck, Reck, & Keefe, 1985, 1987, 1988).

Examination of such issues could provide a source of new knowledge from which to inform policymakers, administrators, teachers, and community members. Information from such studies would provide a credible knowledge base for policymakers and practitioners to consult when the related issues of consolidation and school size are raised. The first year of work entailed examination of the data available and a continuing search of the literature.

Technology in libraries. A specific problem for rural schools has been described in this way:

> Another very real, but invisible, problem that faces small and rural schools is the enormous (and growing) gap between what schools are doing now and what they will need to be doing to meet the demands of what has become to be known as the Information Age (Cole, 1990).

One need only visit the libraries of small, rural high schools to see a general lack of information resources. If teachers are to become more than information-givers and students are to take responsibility for their own learning, they must have ready access to a broad range of information in their school. Rural, small high schools not only face the problem of limited resources for library materials, but often lack the critical mass of students to provide a variety of reference materials--even when per pupil allotments are equal to that of large schools.

Both students and staff must become effective users of ideas and information (Spaulding, 1989). Professional literature, particularly research and development information, is nearly nonexistent in small, rural schools. The meager funds allotted to library materials are usually spent for student materials. The need for information by local educators, particularly in light of the present education agenda, is described in this way:

> The surest way to reform education is to give teachers, principals, and parents the authority and responsibility to make important decisions about how the school will operate. If site-based management and restructuring are to succeed, and if the nation is to make significant progress in achieving the six Goals adopted by the President and the governors, local educators must have ready access to research and instructional information to make rational decisions leading to school improvement (Stonehill & Brandhorst, 1991).

Rural educators must resolve the issue of information access if they are to participate fully in the school reform movement. Two trends in rural education may provide an answer to this problem. These trends are (1) the application of technology and (2) the use of shared resources (Barker & Muse, 1985; Hull, 1986; Monk, 1989; Stephens, 1988). The Technology in Libraries activity of the RSS program explores these concepts as they apply to rural high school libraries.

Key Procedures Employed

The need for a better knowledge base for policymakers and practitioners regarding the related issues of school consolidation and school size was addressed by a Task 3 activity. A quantitative study was initiated that would use existing data at state departments of education in the Region. Other rural education needs were addressed in three Task 2 activities: (1) technology in libraries, (2) dissemination, and (3) special technical assistance.

Research on the effects of closing and consolidating rural and small schools. RSS staff began this activity using work completed under the previous contract. RSS staff had developed extensive data sets of the rural schools in the AEL Region and had conducted preliminary studies, particularly of the secondary schools in West Virginia. Rural school finance, a critical component of any consolidation study, was the topic of a conference convened by Mary Hughes. The proceedings of the conference were published as a special issue of the Journal of Education Finance and were distributed to interested educators, in addition to those on the subscription list of that journal.

An extensive and ongoing review of the literature regarding district and school consolidation was a major activity during the first year of the contract. A major focus of the review was to identify the variables that should be considered in a study and generate the questions to be addressed. Seven question areas were identified: (1) state's purposes for consolidation of schools, (2) communities' purposes for consolidation of schools, (3) parents' purposes for consolidation of schools, (4) students' purposes for consolidation of schools, (5) local governments' purposes for consolidation of schools, (6) taxpayers' purposes for consolidation of schools, and (7) small by choice and small due to isolation.

Hughes contacted individuals at the state departments of education in each state to develop a working relationship and assess the data available. It was determined at this time to build upon the data already assembled about West Virginia and to do an in-depth study of the context in which consolidation has taken place in that state. Such an approach would provide a background with which to design the details of the study. A report of the feasibility of the study and recommendations for the design would be prepared by the end of the first year.

Technology in libraries. This activity also builds upon a special project from the previous contract. In that contract, RSS staff helped expand the Southside Virginia Library Network, a network of school and public libraries connected electronically to the Longwood College Library. Faculty and students in these high schools had access to the holdings of the college library and were provided requested materials on interlibrary loan. Upon the suggestion of RSS staff, several of these high school libraries purchased the hardware and software for ERIC on CD-ROM. RSS staff monitored the impact of these expanded library resources on faculty and students with anecdotal records and logs of use. In addition, videotapes were developed showing how the librarians, students, and faculty used the network.

The use of ERIC and the college library holdings was far greater than expected and had three outcomes. First, a producer of ERIC on CD-ROM granted AEL a master agreement in which schools in the AEL Region could purchase subscriptions at a discount. Second, RSS staff proposed in the new contract to help other schools in the Region to establish similar library networks and to develop a manual for establishing and maintaining networks. Third, RSS staff proposed in the new contract to document the various ways in which these expanded library resources could be used to improve curriculum and instruction and to develop a guide for such use.

RSS staff determined that the critical element in the establishment of a network was the willingness of a college or university to provide access to their library holdings in a timely manner. Although most interlibrary loans take 10 days to two weeks to fill, Longwood College provided materials to schools within two to four days after a request was made. The first task was to identify higher education institutions that would be willing to serve as the nucleus for a network serving schools in their area.

Two RSS staff members visited prospective institutions to present the concept of networking with schools in their areas. Each visit resulted in a debriefing of the session and a report that highlighted the conversations. These reports became a diary that served two purposes: (1) to provide information to be used to improve these presentations and (2) to capture problems and issues that would be included in the manual for establishing and maintaining library networks.

RSS staff discussed the need for documenting use of the expanded resources to improve curriculum and instruction with superintendents of the districts participating in the Southside Library Network. It was proposed that district personnel identify a school improvement project that would involve teachers in using research and development information. Again, records of these discussions were included in the diary for the purposes described above.

Evaluation of the Technology in Libraries activity was to answer the following questions: (1) To what extent were resources available to high schools in the networks expanded by the use of technology?; (2) To what extent did resource-sharing improve?; (3) To what extent were available resources used by students and faculty?; and (4) What was the effect of expanded resources on curriculum and instruction, on decisionmaking by professionals and board members, and on student behavior?

Dissemination. The findings of RSS activities were to be shared with others interested in rural education through three dissemination endeavors: (1) an insert in AEL's newsletter, (2) packets for disseminating findings of the Consolidation Impact Studies (a Task 3 activity), and (3) collaboration with regional and national associations.

Special technical assistance. This activity was designed to allow RSS staff to take advantage of opportunities to collaborate with local education agencies and others to conduct projects in settings that exhibit problem sets characteristic of small, rural schools. The work with the Southside Virginia Library Network is a good example of a successful special project conducted in 1987-1990. Implementation of Special Technical Assistance projects was to depend upon (a) the opportunities that arise and (b) the approval of project plans under the provisions of the AEL Project Planning and Evaluation Process.

Major Accomplishments by Type or Activity

The accomplishments of the RSS program will be discussed in terms of the Task 3 activity--Research on the Effects of Closing and Consolidating Rural and Small Schools--and the three Task 2 activities--Technology in Libraries, Dissemination, and Special Technical Assistance.

Research on the effects of closing and consolidating rural and small schools. Mary Hughes, the principal investigator for this project, left AEL on October 1, 1991, to accept another position. However, she conducted a comprehensive search of the literature regarding consolidation issues during the year. Since school finance is one of the driving forces behind most consolidation efforts, particular attention was given to that topic. The depth to which Hughes was involved in the study is evident in the following presentations.

- American Education Finance Conference, Williamsburg, VA, "Portrait of the Educational Environment of High and Low Expenditure School Districts, Commonwealth of Virginia, 1988-89," March 1991.

- Symposium Chair, "Fiscal Policies for Rural Schools," American Education Finance Conference, Williamsburg, VA, March 1991.

- National Rural and Small Schools Consortium, Nashville, TN, "Rurality, Achievement, and School District Size," March 1991.

- American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL, "Overview and Assessment of Two Methods for Communicating with State Policymakers in a Four-State Region About Research Findings Related to the Financing of Rural, Small Schools," April 1991.

- Seminar on education finance for congressional staffers in Washington, cosponsored by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, "Quest for Equity: Changing Policy Roles," July 1991.

- Rural Caucus of the West Virginia School Boards Association, "Rural School Finance," October 1991.

Hughes also completed an intensive study of the history of school organization and consolidation in West Virginia in order to better understand the context in which consolidation takes place. A draft report was prepared before she left AEL that summarizes what she has learned about the feasibility of the research that was planned along with recommendations for continuation. The following excerpt from the draft report captures those recommendations:

> A study on consolidation will be complex, time consuming, expensive, and inconclusive. Studying one aspect of the issue would be unethical, as the researcher would not be presenting the whole story and may be leaving out facts that would alter the findings. The findings of a study would not be reflective of other areas, other states, or communities. The findings would be specific to the topic and community studied.
>
> After constructing the historical background of public elementary and secondary education and consolidation of schools and/or districts in West Virginia and upon consideration of that historical review, I have come to the conclusion that the issue of consolidation is very complex and site specific. Therefore, I would recommend that AEL not conduct a four-year study on the consolidation issue. If AEL feels compelled to do a study, then I recommend the study be a series of case studies where all aspects of the issue are researched. This type of study would involve qualitative and quantitative analysis. The conclusions drawn would be site specific (Hughes, 1991).

The recommendations noted above and the disposition of the paper are being considered by RSS staff and AEL administrators. Much work has been done regarding consolidation. The RSS database has been expanded and a sound conceptual framework for a comprehensive study has been identified. However, such a study would be more than the quantitative analysis of existing data envisioned in the proposal. Ways to capitalize on the work accomplished in this project are under study.

Activity 1: Technology in libraries. Discussions were held with four institutions of higher education regarding the establishment of library networks: Glenville College (WV), Salem-Teikyo University (WV), Concord College (WV), and East Tennessee State University (TN). These sessions resulted in the establishment of one new library network and the development of substantive guidelines for establishing such networks.

The new library network centers around the libraries of Concord College and Bluefield State College and includes three high schools in Mercer County (WV). Each school library will have ERIC on CD-ROM available for both faculty and students. One library director serves both colleges and was instrumental in establishing the network. Bluefield has a complete ERIC microfiche collection and has agreed to loan the schools requested microfiche. A Mercer County staff member is an adjunct faculty member working at one of the colleges and will provide quick turnaround for requested microfiche by hand delivering them to the schools. The combined libraries subscribe to 190 of the periodicals abstracted in the ERIC database and will provide hard copy of articles requested.

The present disc for ERIC on CD-ROM contains the resumes of 126,277 documents and 175,910 journal articles for a total of 302,187 resources added to those previously available to faculties and students in these schools. The following table illustrates how student and faculty access to information will be increased in each of the schools.

School	Previous Holdings	Percent Increase
Bluefield High School	8,700	3,473
Montcalm High School	5,855	5,161
Princeton High School	14,550	2,077

The ideal network would include access to all library holdings of the two colleges. The director of libraries is willing to cooperate, but claims that the cost for the schools to become members of the library consortium containing the database would be in excess of $200,000 initial fee plus $1,100 per month usage charge. This would be prohibitive for any school. However, RSS staff have learned that a statewide database of library holdings may be available to schools at no cost and are in the process of investigating the possibility. In addition, staff are investigating placing library holdings on CD-ROM for school use. This use of technology would be cheaper than online access. In addition, CD-ROM would overcome the problem of inadequate phone lines in many rural areas that cause poor transmission of data. RSS staff plan to consult with the West Virginia Library Commission regarding the matter.

Among the learnings of RSS staff in the work conducted so far are the following:

- The role of AEL as a provider of technical assistance must be clear early in the presentation to higher education faculty.
- Active participation of a member of the administration or education faculty at the institution is helpful in promoting the establishment of a network.
- One cannot assume that all library directors in higher education are willing to open their libraries to high school students and faculties.
- Active participation of superintendents or academic supervisors is helpful in promoting the establishment of a network.
- Not all higher education institutions have electronic library catalogs that can be accessed by schools.
- Institutions that have ERIC microfiche collections provide a good starting point for a library network.
- Many high schools are already using other encyclopedias and other databases on CD-ROM, but have not thought about obtaining the ERIC database.
- Establishing a library network requires a considerable investment of time and effort because so many individuals must collaborate.
- The videotapes of ERIC on CD-ROM and online college library catalogs in high schools are very effective tools for arousing the interest of college and school administrators in the concept of library networking.

RSS staff have collected several ideas for using the expanded library resources for improving curriculum and instruction. For example, one district identified six teachers interested in cooperative learning. District officials designed a program in which these teachers were to search the ERIC database for documents and journal articles related to the topic. If they critiqued eight articles, tried new ideas in their classroom, and prepared a final report of their experiences, they would be granted continuing education credits that could be used for recertification. Other innovative uses of these new resources are still being collected and will appear in the guidebook for improving curriculum and instruction to be completed next year.

Activity 2: Dissemination. The content and format of an insert to AEL's newsletter has been under discussion. The newsletter and several of the existing inserts presently cite rural education literature. For example, a regular section of the newsletter is devoted to new documents entered into the ERIC database by the Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, a subcontract of AEL. Information about RSS and other AEL rural program activities also appears in the newsletter. In addition, the RSS mailing list was created four years ago and directed to the audience related to RSS work at that time and is outdated and unrelated to current rural work at AEL. Publication of an RSS insert has thus far been postponed until a unique audience and purpose are identified by the AEL Editorial Board.

The packets for disseminating findings of the Consolidation Impact Studies will be prepared as those studies are completed.

RSS staff have collaborated with regional (Southern Rural Education Association) and national associations (National Rural Education Association [NREA], National Rural Special Education Consortium, National Rural Small School Consortium, and the American Educational Research Association). Todd Strohmenger is presently serving as a delegate to the delegate assembly of NREA. He also is a member of the legislative committee and the committee for school community relations of that association.

Activity 3: Special technical assistance. Although no major special technical assistance project has been approved, several exploratory technical assistance activities have taken place during the year.

A major RSS project in the previous contract, the School/Community Improvement Process, may become the basis for a special technical assistance project. That project involved a needs assessment conference involving various segments of the community, a steering committee composed of school and community members to select a need from the data and devise a school improvement project that would be recommended to the board of education. Four replications of the process were conducted and a conference to train others to use the process was held. However, all plans for additional replication of the process were abandoned by those trained due to circumstances beyond the control of AEL.

Three of the replications were very successful. In one site, administrators claim that the work of RSS will save the taxpayers of the district $6 million over the life of a bond issue because of the way in which the process involved the community and gained its support. Although the fourth site was not successful, much was learned about school and community conditions required for a successful project. Now a staff member of the Virginia State Department of Education wants to replicate an adaptation of the process in a district he feels would benefit from it. Since this will be the first replication of the process by someone other than RSS staff, close monitoring of the adaptation and the revision of manuals for the process may be a worthy special project.

RSS staff have responded to three special requests for the RSS needs assessment conferences. A conference with a high school faculty resulted in an unusually challenging set of needs statements. Most statements seemed to indicate problems in the administration of the school. The principal and superintendent were removed recently and the new principal would like the needs assessment repeated at the end of the school year to see if some change in teacher attitude has taken place. In another case, representative faculty from each building in the district participated and developed a unique set of needs. In the third situation, a needs assessment conference for a Virginia school division was conducted at the request of a staff member of the Virginia Department of Education. A special project may be designed around the variations of the needs assessment process and a manual developed reflecting the variations that may be used.

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Information Services Program

The Information Services program is one of seven programmatic activities carried out by AEL to accomplish OERI's Task 2, Assist Efforts to Improve Educational Outcomes, Especially for At-Risk Students. In addition, the Information Services program provides coordination for carrying out work pursuant to Task 1, Develop Effective Governance, Management, and Planning Systems; Task 4, Collaborate With Other Agencies and Organizations; Task 5, Conduct Evaluation; and Task 6, Improve Linkages Between Early Childhood Education and Early Elementary School. This section offers information about the rationale, procedures, and accomplishments of the Information Services program during FY 91.

Rationale for Program

Educators and policymakers in the Appalachian Region perceive AEL to be an "information utility" that responds objectively and promptly to their requests for research-based information, according to external evaluators of the Laboratory's performance. Client surveys, carried out annually by the external evaluators since 1986, reveal that information services is the most visible, best known, most widely used category of services offered by the Laboratory (Western Michigan University, 1989). This finding is supported strongly in the recent National Center for Education Statistics' report (1990) of an OERI-supported study on school districts' use of R & D resources. In order to ensure that those highly valued services continue, AEL established and operated in FY 91 the Information Services program. This program replaced the School Services Center operated by AEL under the previous Regional Educational Laboratory contract.

It was not clear when the Laboratory was reorganized in 1985 that its new "with and through" programs would be able to reach out to their designated audiences and achieve the collaboration necessary to assist with improvements at the school level. So, the School Services Center was designed to ensure that school improvement assistance, generally, would continue to be available from the Laboratory.

However, the seven programs were extraordinarily successful, both in establishing their credibility and utility with their respective target audiences and in initiating cross-program collaborations that address school-level improvement needs. The programs' successes led to increased demands for information services from the AEL Resource Center operated by this program. So great was the press for those services that, following the suggestions of consultant-evaluator Richard Brickley, additional program resources were allocated by the program's Board Advisory Committee to the Resource Center (Brickley, 1987).

Since that reallocation of program funds to the Resource Center, demand for services has continued to increase. Concomitantly, the programs' collaboration has increased to address more school improvement needs and client groups are acting more collaboratively. It is because of this type of success and because of the growing need for information services that this program changed its name and refocused its purpose for the FY 91-95 contract period.

The purposes of the new Information Services program are: (1) to provide clients and staff access to state-of-the-art information on education issues, (2) to respond to clients' general requests for R & D-based assistance, and (3) to provide the Laboratory staff and Board of Directors with timely information about emerging regional education needs and about AEL's performance as a Regional Educational Laboratory contractor.

Evidence from AEL's quarter-century of experience as a Regional Educational Laboratory contractor and from the reports of external reviewers, third-party evaluators, and the OERI External Review Team confirms that access to understandable summaries of research and best-practice information is essential to the successful operation of the Laboratory serving this Region. For example, the 1987 External Review Team reported, "AEL is the major group to provide R & D-based products and holds the esteemed position within the Region" (Levin, 1987). The Information Services program provides staff and clients awareness of and access to standardized and customized information services and products. The staff of the Lab use the information services to develop their programs and serve their respective client groups. Educators and policymakers also access this program's services directly, using the Lab's toll-free telephone lines, FAX, and regular mail.

Key Procedures Employed

To accomplish the purposes discussed above, the Information Services program carries out four activities that address five overall functions. These activities and functions are arrayed in Figure 1, following.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the first activity of this program is to operate the AEL Resource Center. The Center includes a professional library of 5,500 volumes; a complete ERIC microfiche collection and reproduction capability; online and CD-ROM searching capability; News-Scan, Communication Service Assistance Program (CSAP), and Resource Center Holdings databases; a computer software collection; and topical files on R & D products not yet accessioned into the ERIC system. The Resource Center has been a central element of AEL's Regional Educational Laboratory operation since 1966. The 1987 External Review Team referred to it as "the heart of the Lab" (Levin, 1987), and the 1988 and 1989 external evaluation reports by Western Michigan University cited the Center as one of the major elements contributing to clients' perceptions of AEL as "an information utility...that is filling a niche that otherwise would not be filled in the Region."

Functions	Activities			
	Resource Center	The Link/ Occasional Paper Series	Provide Coordination for T1/T4/T5/T6	Dissemination
Information Resources	X	X		X
Consultation	X			
Technical Assistance	X			
Producing Publications		X		
Project Management			X	

Figure 1

Provision of Information Resources

The AEL Resource Center carries out three primary functions. First, the Center provides information resources to Laboratory clients. Resources are provided both proactively and reactively, that is, the Center both advertises its new acquisitions in a special insert of The Link newsletter and responds to specialized requests from clients received by mail, phone, or FAX. The Center also has a consultation function, that is, it helps clients clarify their information needs so that the materials provided them by the Center are more targeted and helpful. The Center also performs a technical assistance function, that is, it helps schools and school districts work through a problem by providing them help with needs assessment, project design, or data interpretation assistance.

The second activity the Information Services program conducts is to produce The Link and the AEL Occasional Paper Series. The Link is a quarterly newsletter that informs the Region's educators about R & D-based products and practices that address the needs of the Region's schools. The basic Link is twelve 8 1/2 x 11 pages, stapled, and printed by a Government Printing Office-identified contractor on prepunched ivory stock. The basic Link is customized for specific target audiences by the various AEL programs. Through inserts and wraparounds, the programs create six different versions of The Link that are targeted to various groups of educators in the Region. Turning to the AEL Occasional Paper Series, AEL has produced 33 occasional papers through 1991. The series is not restricted by specific format, topic, or page length requirements. However, the occasional papers must address significant needs of the Region, be attentive to the basic canons of research, and be written for a general audience of educators and policymakers. These papers run the gamut: from reports of original research to evaluations of promising practices to reports of an innovative staff development conference to a treatise on the context of rural education. While The Link addresses primarily the function of providing information resources, the Occasional Paper Series addresses the function of producing R & D publications.

The third Information Services program activity is to provide coordination for carrying out the Lab's Task 1, Task 4, Task 5, and Task 6 work. The purpose of the activity is to provide an organizational home and some coordination for four Regional Educational Laboratory tasks that include important information components and to ensure that these components function harmoniously and, perhaps, synergistically with the other activities of the program. By positioning these tasks in the Information Services program, AEL seeks to ensure that staff assigned to the four tasks interact with each other and become informed about the gestalt of the program's work. Similarly, AEL intends to achieve improved information products by grouping together many of those responsible for producing them. Obviously, this activity is related primarily to the project management function of the Information Services program.

The fourth activity of the Information Services program is dissemination. This activity is the mechanism for the program to distribute its R & D products and publications. The products and publications mentioned previously that will be distributed under this activity are AEL's quarterly newsletter, The Link, and the AEL Occasional Paper Series. Other products that will be distributed under this activity are:

- News-Scan Bulletin: The News-Scan Bulletin is a six-page, corner-stapled, summary of News-Scan trends and issues that emerge from staff's analysis of the News-Scan database. The primary audience for the Bulletin is the AEL Board of Directors. However, it is shared also with other educators and policymakers who request it. Current circulation of the News-Scan Bulletin is approximately 75.

- "R & D Notes": This AEL publication contains 10 to 15 one-page abstracts that describe a new R & D report or other product that is available at cost from the Regional Educational Laboratories or other participating R & D producers. These abstracts are provided to AEL as part of the Communication Service Assistance Program, a collaborative effort of all the Regional Educational Laboratories. Approximately 1,000 copies of "R & D Notes" are sent to program contacts each month so that they can be shared with colleagues who may wish to obtain the R & D products described in the abstracts.

- Prepackaged searches: The Resource Center identifies high frequency research requests that merit prepackaging. Such prepackaged searches are advertised through The Link and are distributed by the Resource Center, as well as by the programs.

- Product bulletins: These bulletins are one-to-four page announcements of AEL-produced R & D products. The products may be presented individually or in topical sets. The audiences for these bulletins are the educators and policymakers that constitute AEL's client base. The bulletins are distributed both by mail and as a handout at AEL events.

- R & D Preview: This 12-to-16 page magazine is produced, published, and disseminated by the Council for Educational Development and Research under subcontract to the Regional Educational Laboratories. During FY 91, approximately 3,700 policymakers and education officials nationwide received the magazine, including 350 from AEL's Region. As the title implies, the magazine previews findings of studies conducted by the Regional Educational Laboratories and R & D Centers before the studies are published. This dissemination activity of the Information Services program addresses primarily the information resources function.

Major Accomplishments by Type or Activity

The accomplishments of the Information Services program for this contract year follow. The accomplishments are clustered under the program's four activity titles.

Activity 1: Operate the AEL Resource Center.

- This year, requests to the Resource Center (RC) for free materials totaled 1,110 and resulted in the dissemination of 4,791 documents. There were 530 information search requests processed.

- RC staff include a "Resource Center Free Materials Evaluation Form" with each set of requested materials. Throughout the year, 73 percent of the respondents indicated that they had used RC services before, while 27 percent were first-time users. On a 0-50 scale of satisfaction for the four items of ease in obtaining materials, RC responsiveness, AEL/RC credibility, and usefulness of materials, respondents rated the RC at 48.64, 48.59, 47.16, and 44.07 respectively. The greatest improvement need identified was for systematic followup with clients about the status of their information requests.

- During the third quarter, data entry was completed for all three of the RC's databases: News-Scan, CSAP, and Resource Center. On November 22, an open house was held to familiarize staff with the user-friendly databases and other resources available from the center.

- Staff received and incorporated into the RC database 12 sets of CSAP blurbs. Staff assembled the CSAP blurbs into 12 sets of "R & D Notes" for distribution to the Region's educators and policymakers.

- Staff responded to various requests from school districts and others for technical assistance in analyzing school improvement problems:

  - Facilitated a representative group of Harrison County (WV) educators that was discussing how to revise local school policy to accommodate the requirements of 1991 state legislation.

  - Met with a citizen who wanted to make a sizeable contribution to the Kanawha County (WV) School District. AEL assisted this citizen to identify programs that were targeted for children who "are able, but are not working up to their full potential" and to put the citizen in contact with the operators of those programs.

  - Assisted the West Virginia Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education by reviewing recommendations that had been prepared for inclusion in the Commission's final report and making revision suggestions to the Commission director.

  - Assisted visiting officials from six rural school districts in southwest Tennessee to identify ways they could upgrade their schools so as to best serve families that would be moving into their area to take jobs spawned by the opening of a major aerospace manufacturing facility in their locale.

  - Assisted the visiting special projects coordinator of a rural Tennessee district to determine how best the several millions of dollars that the district had acquired recently from several sources could be expended to ensure the development of world-class schools.

  - Met with Nicholas County (WV) school officials to help them clarify what training their staff would require to implement a new teacher evaluation system developed by the county.

  - Assisted Carroll County (VA) school officials and collaborators from the Virginia Department of Education to consider alternatives for an evaluation design that would assess their model rural schools project.

  - Assisted Rogersville City (TN) schools officials and collaborating consultants from East Tennessee State University to discuss alternatives they might explore for dramatically improving their one-school district--for restructuring it as a break-the-mold rural school district.

Activity 2: Produce The Link and Occasional Paper Series.

- The printer contracted through the Government Printing Office met established deadlines, and all four issues of The Link were mailed on schedule. After culling the mailing list during the first quarter, the number of names dropped to just over 3,000. By the end of the fourth quarter, the mailing list had grown to exceed 5,000. AEL responded to various requests throughout the year, either for camera-ready copies of The Link or for multiple copies to distribute at conferences or meetings. The Link prepared for the fourth quarter was a special issue that focused on mathematics and science, and was 20 pages in length, rather than the usual 12.

- Per the "FY 91 List of Products and Publications," the Information Services program was to produce one occasional paper per contract year. Staff exceeded expectations in FY 91 by producing two occasional papers: A Framework for Evaluating State Policy Options for the Reorganization of Rural, Small School Districts (Occasional Paper 32 written by E. Robert Stephens) and Making Connections II: Four Educational Perspectives (Occasional Paper 33 edited by Kimberly Hambrick).

Activity 3: Provide coordination for Tasks 1, 4, 5, and 6.

- Under Task 1, staff completed the design, testing, and installation of the AEL environmental scanning system called News-Scan. The News-Scan database consists of both hard copy files and user-friendly computer files of all education-related articles published in one major newspaper from each of AEL's four states. Its primary purpose is to assist the AEL Board in its ongoing needs assessment and planning process. Also under Task 1, staff produced four quarterly issues of the new publication, News-Scan Bulletin. The bulletin is a synthesis of data in the News-Scan files. The premiere issue was evaluated by members of the AEL Board, AEL staff, and other News-Scan Bulletin readers. Finally, a new state planning meeting process was designed, developed, and implemented in FY 91. The centerpiece of the process is a planning meeting of key state officials, Board members, and key AEL staff held in conjunction with the quarterly meetings of the AEL Board of Directors. Three such state planning meetings were held in FY 91: Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee. The major outcome of each planning meeting was a written report of state-specific needs the Lab can address through its current programs, through brokering assistance from other R & D providers, and through joint resource development with the state.

- Under Task 4, AEL participated in thematic collaboratives, OERI-sponsored meetings and activities, and the CSAP collaborative. A "Plan for AEL Collaboration Activities in FY 91-92" was prepared and submitted as an appendix to the second quarterly report. The plan included AEL's serving as convening Laboratory for two activities. The first, Roles Rural Schools Can Play to Integrate the

Provision of Social Services, convened in October in conjunction with the National Rural Education Association annual meeting in Jackson, MI. The second, Multiregion Overview and Assessment of Rural School Finance Policy, was not convened due to the untimely resignation of the AEL staff member who proposed it. Also under Task 4, AEL submitted 15 documents to the Communication Services Assistance Program and distributed 12 sets of "R & D Notes" to a total audience of 11,292.

- Under Task 5, AEL prepared three quarterly performance reports that were accepted by OERI and coordinated preparation of the draft annual report. Evaluation accomplishments included negotiation of an external evaluation subcontract with The Evaluation Center of the Western Michigan University; the design, testing, and installation of the AEL Project Planning and Evaluation Process; and the design of two major institution-level evaluations that assessed AEL impact in seven impact categories.

- Due to a delayed authorization from HHS and OERI to proceed with work on Task 6, staffing for this project was not in place until the second quarter. However, staff did participate in the required annual national policy symposium and did conduct a regional early childhood education meeting in November.

Activity 4: Dissemination.

- There were five types of products disseminated during FY 91: 12 issues of "R & D Notes"; four issues of the News-Scan Bulletin; prepackaged searches on six selected topics, four issues of The Link; and Occasional Papers 32 and 33. The R & D Preview magazines were disseminated by the subcontractor, the Council for Educational Development and Research. The regional conference proceedings of the Task 6 meeting will be produced and disseminated early in 1992, insofar as the meeting had to be scheduled for late November of 1991. Finally, the two product bulletins scheduled for production in 1991 were carried over into 1992.

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Rural Excel Program

The Rural Excel program is one of three programmatic activities carried out by AEL to accomplish OERI's Task 3, Conduct Applied Research and Development. This section offers information about the rationale, procedures, and accomplishments of the Rural Excel program during FY 91.

Rationale for Program

Most observers of the education scene agree that few fully tested innovations in education have been developed during the past decade. Instead, ideas for school improvement have either been based on R & D tested innovations of the 60s and 70s or they have not been R & D-based at all.

How do we know "what works" in terms of efficiency and effectiveness for achieving desired student performance? Shall we depend on the testimony of learned and/or politically powerful people? Many of the innovations adopted during the past decade have been so based; regrettably, the major improvements in student performance originally projected for most such innovations have not materialized.

AEL staff have found a readiness on the part of state-level policymakers to consider small-scale experimentation as one of the principal methods for identifying appropriate approaches to school improvement. This new attitude is reflected in recent legislative actions within the AEL Region.

The work of the Rural Excel program differs in some important ways from that of most long-term, large-scale systematic R & D projects of the 60s and 70s. While the rigorous scientific experimentation involving design-test redesign-retest is similar to that of earlier projects, Rural Excel's projects involve key state-level policymakers, local school practitioners, and higher education faculty in every phase--from project conception to final reporting. Such involvement is possible because of the strong collaborative relationships maintained by AEL's other more service-oriented programs. It is also facilitated by the Lab's Board structure, which provides a quarterly forum where representatives of all these many groups share perspectives.

Key Procedures Employed

While the specific procedures employed in the various R & D projects of the Rural Excel program may vary somewhat, the following general procedures will be employed by all.

Decisionmaking structure. The Rural Excel program is an ongoing operation designed to develop (or refine), test, and report on the veracity of innovative methods and materials for improving student performance in rural, small schools. It is not a single R & D project, but rather an organizational mechanism for selecting, designing, implementing, and reporting on R & D projects. To ensure that decisions about project selection, design, operation, and reporting are responsibly carried out, two organizational groups have been created:

- the Rural Excel Program Advisory Committee, made up of six to eight members from the AEL Board of Directors; and
- the Rural Excel Coordinating Committee, composed of one key person appointed by the Chief State School Officer from each of the four states within the AEL Region.

Small-scale, systematic development projects. In the language of social science, Rural Excel projects are systematic development projects. Each project follows the basic pattern of design-test redesign-retest until either an effective innovation is produced or the innovation is judged unsatisfactory and further development abandoned. Some of the program's projects may involve multiyear operation and many local school test sites, but none will be of a large-scale, long-term nature.

Project implementation. Each project will be planned according to the AEL Project Planning and Evaluation Process, which includes a peer review and executive review of both the project plan and the final report. The project plans include (1) introduction, (2) purpose, (3) objectives, (4) procedures, (5) outcomes, and (6) evaluation plan. The Rural Excel projects are in different content areas; therefore, it would be impossible to employ a large staff to implement and oversee each iteration of them. Instead, these projects will utilize collaborative teams of college faculty, state department of education personnel, and local school personnel.

Student performance assessment. At the heart of this program's projects will be appropriate methods for assessing changes in student performance that are sufficient to judge the practicality of the innovations being tested. This kind of student assessment is not easy to accomplish, and it will not be perfectly accomplished in the Rural Excel program's projects. However, the practical design and data gathering problems to be confronted in these projects are those that confront education practitioners every day. They are also criterion measures to drive the new era of education reform that Kentucky and a few other states are pioneering.

Major Accomplishments by Type or Activity

The Rural Excel program is a new program at AEL. The program's major accomplishments are summarized under the following headings:

- Organizational Tasks,
- Activity 1: Mathematics Instruction, and
- Activity 2: Early Childhood Education.

Organizational tasks. The following organizational tasks were accomplished in FY 91.

- The Executive Committee of the AEL Board of Directors met in Charleston, WV, March 6-7, 1991, to interview applicants for the position of director of the Rural Excel program. Upon completion of the review process, they named Robert D. Childers as program director. Childers has elementary, secondary, and higher education experience, as well as 10 years of R & D experience at AEL.
- To ensure that the Rural Excel program's work is responsive to the individual state needs, a special coordinating committee, composed of one member from each state's department of education, was formed. The following members were appointed by the Chief State School Officer from the respective states:

  - Lin Corbin-Howerton, Lead Analyst
    Policy and Planning Section
    Virginia Department of Education

  - Estel Mills, Assistant Commissioner
    Division of Curriculum and Instruction
    Tennessee Department of Education

  - Keith Smith, Assistant Superintendent
    Bureau of General, Special and Professional Education
    West Virginia Department of Education

  - Diane Teasley, Director
    Division of Program Resources
    Kentucky Department of Education

- Prior to convening the members, Childers conducted a personal visit to each of the states to discuss the Rural Excel program and how it can best meet some of the states' rural education needs. During these visits, much of the time was devoted to a discussion of the needs of the individual states and potential projects for the Rural Excel programs. In Virginia, the state representative convened a small group of key State Department of Education personnel to be a part of a three-hour discussion. One of the interesting things that came out of these meetings was the number of questions asked about what the other states in the Region were doing in certain areas and the lack of contact these persons have with others in similar positions across the state lines.

- The first meeting of the coordinating committee was held in Charleston, WV, on July 10, 1991. Members present included Lin Corbin-Howerton, Keith Smith, and Diane Teasley. Lorraine Singer attended the meeting as an alternate for Estel Mills from Tennessee. Childers provided a summary of his findings during his initial visit to each of the states. During the meeting, the coordinating committee members:

  - agreed to assume the task of serving on the coordinating committee;

  - identified mathematics and early childhood education as the content areas for the first round of Rural Excel projects;

  - agreed to appoint content specialists from the state departments of education to represent them on various projects as needed; and

  - recommended that future meetings of the coordinating committee be scheduled as needed, rather than on a routine schedule. Consideration should be given to scheduling meetings at field test sites when appropriate.

- Since the first meeting, Childers has conducted another personal visit to three of the four states. Estel Mills from Tennessee retired in July and was replaced by Tom Cannon, the new assistant commissioner. Between meetings and personal visits, Childers has maintained communications by letter and phone.

- A program advisory committee, made up of nine members of the AEL Board of Directors, has been appointed by the Board president. This committee has met quarterly to review the plans and work of the Rural Excel program.

Activity 1: Mathematics instruction. Mathematics instruction was identified by the program advisory committee and the coordinating committee as a need area in the Region. A national dialogue on the need to improve mathematics instruction has been stimulated by a number of recent publications, i.e.: Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics; Everybody Counts: A Report to the Nation on the Future of Mathematics Education; Science for all Americans; Reshaping School Mathematics: A Philosophy and Framework for Curriculum; On the Shoulder of Giants: New Approaches to Numeracy; Professional Standards for Teaching Mathematics; Counting on You: Actions Supporting Mathematics Teaching Standards; and The State of Mathematics Achievement: NAEP's 1990 Assessment of the Nation and the Trial Assessment of the States.

Recognized authorities (as cited in the statements that follow) have identified a number of critical needs that, if met, would improve instruction in mathematics. Those deemed by staff as most relevant to the Rural Excel project are:

- Students in the United States are not prepared to think mathematically to the extent they should be (Arends, 1987; Lapointe, Mead, & Phillips, 1989; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1991; National Governors' Association, 1990; Porter, 1988).

- Students learning mathematics should use real objects and real data, but most are not (Mathematical Sciences Education Board, 1990).

- The discourse of instruction does not nurture mathematical understanding, but should (Lochead & Mestre, 1988; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1991; Putnam, Lampert, & Peterson, 1989).

- Mathematics instruction is textbook-bound, but should not be (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1991; Porter, 1988).

- Students in rural areas have more limited access to good instruction in mathematics than they should have (Enochs, 1988; Giesbrecht, 1978; Haller, Monk, Spotted Bear, Griffith, & Moss, 1990).

The activities manuals project was designed to address the above needs. The project's objectives are to:

- test a set of activity manuals designed to provide "hands-on" experiences, enhance discourse, and reduce exclusive reliance on textbooks in grades five through eight mathematics classrooms in rural areas;

- improve the achievement of students in rural classrooms in which teachers implement the activities in the activity manuals; and

- assess other features of the classrooms in which teachers implement activities in the activity manuals (e.g., students' attitudes toward mathematics and understanding of mathematical concepts, teachers' responses to use of activities, teachers' responses to inservice training relevant to use of the activity manuals, etc.).

The manuals being tested (Mathematics Activities Manuals) were developed by the Center of Excellence for Science and Mathematics Education (CESME) at the University of Tennessee at Martin. While the manuals have been tested by elementary school teachers, they have not been tested in terms of student performance.

The Activities Manuals project encompasses the following tasks:

- A group of grades five through eight mathematics teachers in Tennessee will be trained in the use of the Mathematics Activities Manuals during the summer of 1991.

- During the academic year 1991-1992, these teachers will implement one activity per week in each of their mathematics classes.

- Data will be gathered on students and teachers before, during, and at the end of the 1991-1992 academic year.

- Data will be analyzed and reported at the conclusion of the 1991-92 academic year.

During FY 91, the following work has been accomplished in the Activities Manuals project:

- A completed draft of the Activities Manuals project plan was submitted for review to members of AEL Board's Rural Excel Program Advisory Committee and Sue Boren, professor of mathematics and computer science at the University of Tennessee. While the reactions to the plan were very positive, Boren noted that the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) was computational based--not activity based--and that the test content was weak on geometry, and statistics and probability. However, it is the only achievement test data available on the students.

- A week-long training program, involving 21 grades five through eight mathematics teachers from Tennessee on the use of the Mathematics Activities Manuals, was conducted June 9-15, 1991. The training was provided by the staff at CESME at the University of Tennessee at Martin. AEL staff evaluated the training program by asking participants to rate the training sessions and the training staff on a series of service quality scales. Measures of participants' Stages of Concern at the end of the training program were also collected and analyzed. A second administration of the Stages of Concern instrument was completed in November and is in the process of being analyzed.

- Written agreements were negotiated between AEL and 21 participating schools in Tennessee. The agreements were signed by the teacher and the school principal. Permission was granted by the school superintendent prior to contacting the school principal.

- A Mathematics Activity Class Log has been developed for the teachers to record the date, name of the activity, primary purpose of the activity, effectiveness rating, and comments on factors concerning the effectiveness during implementation. The teachers are maintaining a separate log for each math class.

- A Class Roster has been designed and provided to teachers to record students' names, sex, and the students' mathematics scores on the TCAP. Students' performance on the spring 1991 administration will be utilized as the pretest. The TCAP will be administered again in spring 1992 as the posttest.

- Staff developed a Mathematics Attitude Scale and Mathematics Opinionnaire that have been administered to all students involved in the project. Each instrument contains 25 items that measure students' (1) perceptions of mathematics classes and (2) opinions about mathematics in the world outside school.

- A record for each student has been entered in an electronic database. Students' names and responses to the above questionnaires have already been recorded, as well as such background data as grade level, teacher name, and date of administration. As achievement data are reported they, too, will be added to each student's record. In other words, the database has been planned to contain all project data for each student in each classroom.

Staff plan to use the data being collected in two ways. First, data will be analyzed to determine if any changes occur in students' attitudes and opinions during the course of the 1991-1992 academic year. Comparisons will examine the pre- and posttest means and variances to assess changes across project sites and within project sites. Analysis of variance will be used, for example, to determine whether or not significant differences exist overall, between teachers, between grade levels, and, possibly, between genders. The purpose of these analyses will be to provide data on the effect of mathematics activities on students' attitudes and opinions of mathematics.

Second, data will be analyzed to determine the reliability and the concurrent and predictive validity of the existing 25-item instruments, the performance of particular items within each instrument, and, possibly, the factor structure of each instrument and of both instruments together. These analyses will contribute to the improvement of the existing instruments for use by researchers and practitioners in other settings. Staff are particularly interested in developing a reliable and valid instrument to assess mathematics opinions and attitudes.

Eventually, multivariate analysis--controlling for previous achievement and achievement growth--may be possible by combining data about attitudes and opinions with the achievement data.

Activity 2: Early childhood education. The first R & D project in this activity is called Family Connections. "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn" is one of our key national goals. The Family Connections project will address two of the three objectives to help meet this readiness goal. Those objectives are:

- All disadvantaged and disabled children will have access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school.

- Every parent in America will be a child's first teacher and devote time each day helping his or her preschool child learn; parents will have access to the training and support they need (National Governors' Association, 1990).

Across all four AEL states, two concerns are heard repeatedly from SEA staff advising the Rural Excel program:

- How to provide "developmentally appropriate" programs for three-, four-, and five-year-old children.

  The question behind this concern is "How can schools 'help children be ready for school' in ways that match the natural timetables of their individual development as young children?"

- How to establish programs that encourage meaningful parental involvement among parents of young children.

  We know that learning begins in the home (e.g., with parents who themselves read and who read to their children). The question behind this concern, therefore, is "What can schools do to promote families providing supportive environments in their homes for preschool children?"

The Family Connections project is designed to address the foregoing needs. Work is guided by the following objectives:

- to increase the number of communications between teachers and families of young children,

- to increase the amount of time families spend with their young children on developmentally appropriate learning activities, and

- to increase parental understanding of "developmentally appropriate" curriculum and activities in programs for young children.

The project has three major tasks:

- Develop and test instructional materials and processes for training early childhood teachers. These materials will have two major purposes: (a) to motivate teachers of young children to form partnerships with the families of their students and (b) to help teachers feel more comfortable in this new role of working with adults as well as children.

- Develop and test a series of family guides that will encourage families to (a) interact with their young children in developmentally appropriate ways, and (b) communicate with their children's teachers. The guides will be sent into the homes on a weekly basis.

- Develop and test a set of instructional videotapes for families. The purpose of these videos and accompanying materials will be (a) to motivate families to become partners with the schools and teachers of their young children, (b) to help families understand the important role they play in their child's school success, (c) to encourage family members to see themselves as capable teachers of young children, (d) to provide information about how young children learn, and (e) to encourage discussion between and among teachers and other families. The videotapes are to be used in a group setting with the teacher serving as the facilitator. The videotapes also would be available for individual use either through the school or local video rental stores.

During FY 91, the following accomplishments have been achieved in the Family Connections project.

- A two-day conference of 11 early childhood professionals from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia departments of education was held July 10-11 in Charleston, WV. It was the consensus of the group that:

  - In view of what is going on in the field of early childhood education in the four-state Region, that Rural Excel staff continue to explore early childhood education as an R & D project.

  - Any program considered should focus its activities on involving parents as learners and as teachers.

  - In reaching parents, the program should use a variety of strategies and media.

- A draft project plan has been prepared and submitted to the early childhood specialist in each of the four state departments of education for review and critique. Three of the four have been returned with very positive comments.

- As part of Task 1, a one-day workshop for preschool coordinators and preschool teachers was developed and conducted November 15, 1991, at the Holiday Inn in Morehead, KY. The response to the workshop announcement was so great that not everyone could be accommodated. The workshop dealt with parent involvement with special emphasis on conducting home visits. (Teachers in the Kentucky four-year-old preschool program are required to conduct a minimum of two home visits per child during the school year.) Nine participants requested that they be considered as the initial test site for the Family Connections project. Evaluations by the participants were very positive.

- Two prototype family guides (Task 2 above) were produced and submitted to a group of preschool educators for their comments and suggestions. Their reactions were positive. The most common suggestion for improvement was "less words" and "more pictures."

- Interviews with a number of preschool experts were videotaped for future use in developing a set of videotapes for use with parents (Task 3). The experts included Sue Bredekamp, Willie Epps, Sharon Kagan, Oralie McAfee, and Maurice Sykes.

- Negotiated agreements were reached with key personnel in the Kentucky State Department of Education to test the Family Connections materials in Eastern Kentucky.

The initial testing phase of the Family Connections project will be conducted during the second semester of the 1991-92 school year. It is anticipated that the materials developed can be revised and ready for additional testing during the 1992-93 school year.

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Task 4: Collaborate With Other Agencies and Organizations

For the FY 91-95 contract period, AEL is participating in all phases of Task 4 work. There follows a description of AEL's Task 4 involvement during FY 91.

Rationale for Project

Task 4 provides an opportunity for Regional Educational Laboratories to cooperate and collaborate with other organizations to enhance the overall effectiveness of school improvement efforts. AEL serves a resource-poor Region and is, therefore, very supportive of this strategy. In fact, one of the less publicized manifestations of the poverty that affects the Appalachian Region is the dearth of R & D resources. Few higher education institutions in the Region have the staff to produce new knowledge products. Few local education agencies have the staff to evaluate, acquire, and adapt R & D resources to their needs. Therefore, AEL has participated fully in all three of the Task 4 activities.

Key Procedures Employed

AEL's proposal envisioned the Lab's involvement in all phases of Task 4 work relevant to the needs of its Region. The "Plan for AEL Collaboration Activities in FY 91-92" indicated that staff would be involved in all three Task 4 activities: participate in thematic collaboratives, participate in OERI-sponsored meetings/activities, and participate in CSAP collaborative.

Participate in thematic collaboratives. Prior to the submission of its Task 4 plan as an appendix to the second quarterly report, AEL was involved in several collaborative activities: the school restructuring collaborative, collaboratives on Lab evaluation and on the use of large databases, and intensive communication effort among the Labs and OERI to prepare their respective Task 4 plans. Since the submission of those plans, AEL has convened representatives of the Labs and other organizations involved in Activity 1, Roles Rural Schools Can Play to Integrate the Provision of Social Services, during the National Rural Education Association (NREA) annual meeting. Additionally, AEL is collaborating with Far West Lab and others interested in early childhood education. AEL is also part of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)-convened collaborative on the use of NCES databases and the collaborative on Laboratory evaluation.

Participate in OERI-sponsored meetings/activities. OERI requires that Laboratories attend collaborative meetings and attend an annual forum. Also, OERI expects timely response to various information or administrative communications that arrive by electronic and regular mail, FAX, and phone. AEL staff have cooperated fully in this activity during FY 91.

Participate in CSAP collaborative. The Communication Service Assistance Program (CSAP) is a collaborative among the 10 Regional Educational Laboratories. Through CSAP, the Labs contract with the Council for Educational Development and Research to provide research synthesis services. AEL participated fully in those services during FY 91.

Major Accomplishments by Type or Activity

- During the October meeting of the NREA in Jackson, MS, Todd Strohmenger of AEL convened representatives of those organizations collaborating on Activity 1, Roles Rural Schools Can Play to Integrate the Provision of Social Services. After considerable discussion, an agreement was reached that organizations and agencies interested in continuing with the project would send a letter to Strohmenger indicating such interest and suggesting a purpose and direction for the collaborative. Prior to the meeting during NREA, Strohmenger provided collaborators with background material, including a paper he prepared on possible roles rural schools could play. OERI Institutional Liaison Carol Mitchell was helpful in providing Strohmenger background information and materials. Tabled until the purpose/direction issue is clarified was Strohmenger's suggestion that the collaborative produce a memo or newsletter for rural communities. The rationale offered was that while there are many documents about integrated services at the policy level, there seemed to be little written about successes and failures of local activities. In addition, most of the examples of integrated service projects involved inner-city settings. Strohmenger proposed that participants in the collaborative solicit articles from operating integrated services projects in their Region. AEL would edit and produce the newsletter and provide camera-ready copy to organizations and agencies in the collaborative.

- The school restructuring collaborative, of which AEL was a part, presented a preconference institute at the annual meeting of the American Association of School Administrators. Sandra Orletsky of AEL participated in planning and conducting the institute.

- The collaborative on Laboratory evaluation convened at Research for Better Schools in October. Merrill Meehan and Kimberly Hambrick represented AEL at the meeting.

- AEL's Carol Perroncel represents the Lab in the collaborative on early childhood education. Perroncel attended a meeting of the collaborative in Denver, CO. She also worked with the Far West Laboratory to schedule four training sessions on their early childhood and comprehensive family support materials--two in Virginia and two in West Virginia--for December. Workshops in Kentucky and Tennessee, it was agreed, will be scheduled for the spring of 1992.

- Craig Howley represented AEL in the collaborative involving the NCES. Howley and other staff represented AEL at three meetings of this group. This activity has resulted in AEL's signing a licensing agreement to conduct research based on analyses of data in various NCES databases.

- Three AEL officials attended the OERI-sponsored forum conducted during the first quarter of this year: Terry Eidell, executive director; John Sanders, deputy executive director; and Todd Strohmenger, co-director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. AEL participated extensively in electronic network communications with OERI and with the other Regional Educational Laboratories. Finally, John Sanders served as one of three Regional Educational Laboratory representatives on OERI's Dissemination Forum Planning Committee that met twice during the fourth quarter. OERI officials, Terry Eidell, and Pamela Lutz, associate director, represented AEL at the November OERI Dissemination Forum in Washington, DC.

- Concerning the Lab's involvement in CSAP, AEL submitted 15 documents to the program. The titles of these documents are listed in AEL's quarterly reports. The monthly CSAP communications from the Council for Educational Development and Research were published under AEL's cover as "R & D Notes." Twelve sets of "R & D Notes" were distributed to a total audience of 11,292.

Task 6: Improve Linkages Between Early Childhood Education and Early Elementary School

Task 6 activities to improve linkages between early childhood education and early elementary school are sponsored by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services through OERI. This work is for the period 1991-93, only.

Rationale for Program

Throughout the 25 years of AEL's history, the Laboratory's regional needs assessments have consistently dictated that preschool education stay high on the agenda of regional educational needs. Task 6, designed to improve linkages between early childhood education and early elementary school, provides an opportunity to complement the Laboratory's prior work related to young children. Just as the nation is concerned with the President and governors' first education goal to be reached by the year 2000, which is that "all children in America will start school ready to learn," so too are educators in AEL's Region. And activities under Task 6 are giving our Region an opportunity to invest in an approach to attain this goal.

More than 20 years ago (1968), AEL designed the Home-Oriented Preschool Education (HOPE) program, an early childhood intervention experiment. Families in the field experiment in southern West Virginia participated in one of three treatments: television-only, television plus home visitor, and television plus home visitor plus group experience. Each year an outside-of-community control group was selected that had no access to any of the treatment components. The experimental design did not attempt to fathom the effects of each component separately, but looked at them additively, as would an administrator making decisions about "how much" of the treatment to adopt and at what cost, for what expected results.

Between 1971-1973, HOPE sites were replicated in five states and a kindergarten comparison study was conducted. Through 1978, AEL developed and published manuals, curricular materials sets, and a home visitor's kit that could be used to support widespread implementation of programs similar to HOPE.

Participation in HOPE's home visitor treatment resulted in more favorable outcomes in parenting, school-family relations, school performance, and children's adjustment. Favorable outcomes in one of these four areas tended to relate to positive outcomes in the remaining areas. The followup study substantiates that HOPE led parents to behave differently toward their children during the ensuing years. Thus, their parenting practices were improved by means of the skills they acquired or sharpened during the time that their children were preschoolers. Their improved parenting practices included their performing more effectively in the area of school-family relations. High rates of promotion and eventual graduation are among the most notable of the ways in which the HOPE children excelled.

At the heart of the HOPE project was the belief that by empowering the parents and training them in essential skill areas, their children would have a better than average potential for success. It is important to recognize, however, that while parents improved their practices, they did not become different in a fundamental sense. They were not asked to adopt a new philosophy or to consciously commit themselves to a lifetime of changed behavior, nor were their parenting practices treated as inferior or lacking in cultural value. The evidence from the HOPE followup supports with great consistency, rather, that all of the valued parent practices were found in the control group, as well. What changed was only the frequency and consistency with which the HOPE parents engaged in these practices. In a sense it may be said that the HOPE parents "did not change; they just became better!" HOPE promoted parent actualization more than it did parent change (Gotts, 1989).

AEL's history and accomplishments with the HOPE project complement Head Starts' commitment to parental involvement in the child's education. Both programs were designed as an early intervention for young children living in poverty. Both programs perceive the family to be the principal influence on the child's early development, and stress the involvement of the parent in the educational life of the child. Both programs were concerned in providing a support system for the parents as they became more efficient in their parenting skills and more comfortable in participating in the classroom.

The linkages and transitional issues addressed in Task 6 have an opportunity to add another dimension to Head Start. All the players in the early childhood community can now be called upon, not just to fight a war on poverty, but also to tackle the President and governors' first goal of education.

The "ripeness" of AEL's Region to tackle linkages and transitions was demonstrated by the response to the Task 6 conference held in Louisville, KY, November 21-22. Designed as a "working conference" to encourage team building and action plans, Kentucky was represented by 10 eight-member teams (supported by a collaborative grant from the Kentucky Head Start Collaboration Project, Chapter 1, and early intervention), 12 two-member teams made up of Head Start directors and public school personnel, and 25 people from the Kentucky Department of Education and other interested parties. Regrettably, AEL is restricted from carrying out Task 6.3, whereby AEL could monitor the progress of linkages and transitions in Kentucky.

Key Procedures Employed

Several procedures were employed to improve linkages between early childhood education and early elementary school. They involved collaboration with the Kentucky Head Start Collaboration Project (KHSCP), meeting with early childhood specialists from state departments in each of the four states AEL serves, meeting with technical assistance providers that serve AEL's states, participating in the national forum, conducting a regional conference, evaluating Task 6 efforts, and disseminating conference proceedings.

Collaboration with the KHSCP. In May 1991, AEL was requested by OERI to collaborate with KHSCP to plan and conduct a conference on transitions. The decision was quickly made to orchestrate one conference, and to collaborate on the plans already laid out by Carol Perroncel. This collaboration made it essential to meet the requirements set out by OERI for AEL, as well as those outlined by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) for KHSCP. Many of the requirements were essentially the same, others for KHSCP were unique for Kentucky. For instance, it became obvious that Kentucky's participation in the national forum would be an important part of KHSCP's plans for the regional conference. Perroncel (AEL) and Linda Likins (KHSCP) met on a number of occasions until a final plan was designed for the Task 6 regional conference.

Meeting with early childhood specialists from state departments in each of the four states AEL serves. Communication with early childhood specialists of state departments of education in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia was an important part of solidifying plans for the Task 6 conference and the region's involvement in the national forum. State level advisory people were contacted representing Chapter 1 and/or Even Start, early childhood specialists of various state departments, early intervention, Follow Through, Head Start, Health and Human Resources, and the Governor's Office. Meetings in each state revealed the level of expected participation from each state in the national forum and the regional conference. Meetings also set the stage for instigating interest in state activity involving linkages and transitions between early childhood education and early elementary school.

Meeting with technical assistance providers that serve AEL's states. One activity Perroncel assisted the KHSCP with was setting up a collaboration forum of technical assistance (TA) providers. In tune with the collaborative effort of Perroncel and Likins, the collaboration forum, which started out to include TA providers serving Kentucky, consisted of all TA providers serving Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

The group met in Louisville, KY, on August 21, 1991, to discuss how they could collaborate to conserve effort and resources in serving the four-state Region, and to discuss how they could best assist AEL and KHSCP during the regional conference. Members of the collaboration forum agreed to serve as facilitators at the regional conference, display available materials at a reception for them to meet participants, and to provide needed followup support to participants who intend to proceed with linkage and transition action plans. This is particularly welcome, since AEL has not been awarded the resources to provide such assistance.

Two dates were set for further consultation and collaboration. One, in early November, was to confirm plans for participation in the regional conference; the other, January 24, 1992, is to plan for further collaborative efforts and begin discussions on the 1992 national and regional symposiums.

Participating in the national forum. The Task 6 coordinator worked as a liaison between OERI and the member states to identify persons who would receive invitations to the national forum. The collaborative venture with KHSCP made it essential to send a large number of representatives from Kentucky. They were to have a major role in the regional conference, and to serve in an advisory capacity for linkages and transitions in Kentucky. Eight were registered through ACF, one through Chapter 1.

Representation from other states was easily decided upon due to the fact that many state-level personnel were unable to travel. Tennessee continues to have a ban on all out-of-state travel, including that paid by a third party. One person from the University of Tennessee attended the conference. She has since become active on the state advisory team, and participated in the regional conference. She was invited to the national forum by Follow Through. Four members from the Virginia state advisory team attended the national forum. West Virginia representatives were unable to attend due to unexpected circumstances.

Conducting a regional conference. Preparations for conducting the regional conference consisted of a variety of activities. In addition to those which have already been discussed, the following had to be considered: (1) determining the focus of the conference, (2) planning an agenda, (3) deciding on presenters, (4) collecting an invitation list, and (5) choosing a location. The first three items were decided upon in consultation with AEL staff, early childhood specialists from various state departments, early childhood consultants, and the KHSCP director. Item 4 was done under the advisement of state contacts. The location, Item 5, was a direct result of the AEL/KHSCP collaboration and the need to meet KHSCP's requirements to conduct a transition conference.

The procedure for involvement in the regional conference varied between Kentucky and Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. This was partly due to the fact that AEL and KHSCP collaborated on the project, and also because each state in the Region is at a different point of awareness of the need for linkages and transitions for young children.

Invitation lists were generated, with the help of advisory people in each state. Recipients included representation of groups such as Chapter 1, Even Start, state and local education agencies, early intervention personnel, Follow Through, Head Start, Health and Human Service agencies, state colleges, and universities. No parents were included on the invitation lists, but were encouraged to be invited by interested agencies. Eleven parents attended the regional conference from Kentucky. The importance of the parent's role in linkages and transitions was made clear during the conference proceedings.

Invitees from Kentucky were handled differently. One result of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) is that state personnel have needed to become aware of the needs and affects of collaboration and linkages. Collaboration has come about partly due to mandates by KERA on the four-year-old program between the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and the Cabinet for Human Resources (CHR). Linkages and transition issues are a major focus of the KHSCP director, both of which resulted in the state advisory team deciding to award grants to teams attending the conference. The grants were a collaboration between KHSCP and the KDE Division of Early Childhood Preschool Branch. A letter of solicitation was sent out laying the parameters of the makeup of necessary members on a team to work on linkages and transitions. One requirement was that the team had to include a parent. Out of 28 applications, 10 were selected to be granted an award that would cover the cost of attending the conference and some money to work on transition during the coming year.

Evaluating Task 6 efforts and disseminating conference proceedings. Two evaluation forms were designed to determine the effect of the conference. One form collected general information; the second evaluated each segment of the conference. The importance of the forms was explained at the beginning of each day, at the end of each breakout session, and again at the close of the conference. Out of 200 people in attendance, 150 forms were completed and returned.

Major Accomplishments by Type or Activity

Accomplishments of Task 6 are outlined below.

- The first collaboration forum was organized by AEL and KHSCP. Members intend to continue to meet and network. The next meeting is scheduled for January 24, 1992.
- The Virginia state advisory members have become aware of the importance of linkages and transitions for young children. They are exerting efforts to come to an agreement as to how to analyze statewide needs, and to agree as to where to begin an implementation plan for linkage and transitions.
- Tennessee state level personnel, unable to leave the state, are very willing to support any effort mobilized in the state for linkages. Many people were identified to send invitations to the regional conference; 17 attended. Out of these participants, nine left Louisville with a commitment to continue to plan linkage and transition activities for young children as they move

from preschool to school. The Tennessee state advisory team is anticipating to meet again after the first of the year to decide how to disseminate information from the national and regional conferences throughout the state.

- Kentucky has mobilized 10 teams of eight people each to commit to work on linkages and transitions between early childhood education and early elementary school.

- A network of early childhood specialists has been "informally" formed in the AEL Region. They represent state departments of education (including Chapter 1), Health and Human Services (including Head Start), Follow Through, institutions of higher education (colleges and universities), resource and referral agencies, and other state organizations.

- A resource notebook on "Preschool-to-School Linkages" was put together. It includes information on national goal #1, policy, transition programs that work, how to involve parents in their child's education, steps to institute linkage and transition programs, information on ERIC, and information on technical assistant providers.

References

Gotts, E. (1989). HOPE, preschool to graduation: Contributions to parenting and school-family relations theory and practice. Technical report. Charleston, WV: Appalachia Educational Laboratory.

PART II: FOURTH QUARTER FY 91
REPORT OF LABORATORY PERFORMANCE

INTRODUCTION

This is a report of the progress made by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) on Contract #RP91002002 during the fourth quarter of FY 91.

This report contains detailed descriptions of the Lab's work organized by the six tasks established by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) for 1991-95 (see the Table of Contents). AEL's eight programs carry out work pursuant to these six tasks. During the fourth quarter, four programs operated solely Task 2 projects; one program operated solely a Task 3 R & D project; two other programs operated Task 3 R & D projects in addition to Task 2 work; and one program performed work relevant to Tasks 1 (Needs Assessment and Planning component), 2, 4, 5, and 6.

Descriptions of program and project work within the task sections follow a format that is intended to present information succinctly. Quarterly progress is reported at the activity level or in a general program- or project-level summary. Directors had the option of using full paragraphs or bulleted sentences to report their work.

The section following this introduction, Success Stories, presents succinct vignettes about noteworthy impacts of the Lab's programs.

SUCCESS STORIES

Success stories are a standard section of AEL quarterly reports. The objective of this section is to present vignettes that capture the intended or unintended impacts of the Lab's work. This quarterly report includes success stories from five AEL programs.

Collaboration continues to be key to success for AEL's Classroom Instruction (CI) program. Members of the West Virginia Training Consortium--the president of the largest teachers' association, the executive director of the Education Fund, and the director of general education for the Department of Education--were convened in April by the CI and School Governance and Administration (SGA) programs to explore training opportunities. Their involvement led to four regional training-for-trainer events held between September 1991 and January 1992 in which cadres of five School Improvement Council members from each district develop skills in decisionmaking. The association executives assisted by developing training objectives, announcing the training in association publications, and providing staff trainers. The department printed manuals from AEL originals, handled registration, served as trainers, and produced videotapes of the training for use in participant workshops. Also, as a result of contacts by these leaders, participants heard keynote addresses from an associate executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, the president of the National Education Association (NEA), the president of Ashland Coal Company, and a representative from NEA's School Service Personnel Division. In addition to coordinating all meetings, CI staff have served as trainers, arranged panel presentations, prepared handout/display materials, evaluated the training, summarized all data for cosponsoring organizations, and provided followup information to all involved.

What people are saying about SGA's Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking (QUILT) staff development program is both exciting and gratifying. Reports from the 13 QUILT districts include the following personal testimonies from the QUILT trainers: In every district, the induction training went well. For most districts, this was the BEST (unqualified) staff development experience the teachers had ever had. Over and over, we hear that the most important outcome of the induction training was a sense of collegiality among the faculty. For many faculty, this was the first time they had ever spent time talking about professional things. This was almost always true for high school faculty, who are usually segregated by departments for inservice and staff development. Trainers have reported incidents in which veteran teachers have testified that "they wanted to retire, they were facing burn-out, but now they couldn't wait to get into the classroom." QUILT has been an especially good experience for seasoned, veteran faculties who needed a good challenge and needed their pilot lights lit. Schools are incorporating QUILT into their school culture, and they are using QUILT to enrich their culture. We have seen (or heard reports of) sample school calendars, memo pads, pencils, "pumpkins," etc., that have the

QUILT logo embedded on them. In Kanawha County (WV), at School A (East Bank Junior High), we understand that there is a huge wooden sign at the entrance to the school depicting the QUILT logo.

Applications for Colleges and Schools program Minigrants nearly doubled between the spring and fall funding competitions of FY 91. Dissemination to program contacts in 122 regional American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) affiliate institutions of more than 1,040 description/cover sheets for the planning and project grants plus announcement in "Dialogue," the program's insert to The Link, and in affiliate newsletters, and distribution of the description/cover sheet at state affiliate conferences got the word out about this effort to provide seed money to college-school partnerships. A total of 52 applications for Minigrants (up from 29 in the spring competition) were received from across the Region prior to the October 30 deadline. Following Minigrant reviewer training, reviewer and program advisory committee (PAC) rating of applications, and PAC allocations of funds, nine Minigrant applications (three planning and six project) were funded for a total of $19,305 in the 11th competition conducted by AEL's program for teacher educators. With scarce resources for higher and K-12 education in the Region and continued improvements in dissemination and announcements (including description in the CI program insert), application numbers are expected to increase.

One purpose of AEL's study in four rural Kentucky school districts is to provide information to state-level policymakers about the implementation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act. Researchers developed "Notes from the Field," a periodic research synthesis, as a primary medium for doing that. It appears to have paid off. At the request of the cochair, the two researchers were invited to a November 14 meeting of the Education Committee's Subcommittee on School Improvement. It seems that, after reading about the study in "Notes," several legislators wanted an opportunity to talk one-on-one with the researchers. The legislators asked penetrating questions; the researchers offered to search their database to answer legislators' specific questions about items that might not be included in reports for the general public. One legislator made a written request at the meeting; another followed up with a letter requesting additional information.

Representatives of major Black organizations and alliances met with the educational subcommittee (coordinators of the demonstration site) to analyze the implication of school consolidation plans (WV). The outcome was a clearly defined set of countywide standards for ensuring quality education for minority students. The goals were stated in terms of student and teacher outcomes, e.g., test score improvement, decrease in teacher absences, and decrease in special education placement for Black males.

One of Rural Excel's projects is testing a set of activities manuals designed to provide "hands-on" experience in mathematics classrooms in rural schools. During a recent Rural Excel Program Advisory Committee meeting in Nashville, TN, Debbie Rushing, one of the participating teachers in the Activities Manuals project, conducted a demonstration of a number of activities from the Mathematics Activities Manuals. Dorothy Jenkins, director of Undergraduate Education at Cumberland University (TN) and committee member, was impressed both with the activities and the enthusiasm of the teacher. Jenkins reported that she shared her set of manuals with Dean Jack Howard, who described the manuals as a "gift of gold." He has already been using them in his methods and materials in mathematics classes. Howard maintains that there is very little activity-based materials on the market for use in algebra and geometry classes.

TASK 1: DEVELOP EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT, AND PLANNING SYSTEMS

Governance

AEL is governed by a 28-member Board of Directors. The Board holds one regular meeting each quarter of the corporation's fiscal year. These meetings, usually held in or near the state capitals, are rotated among the Region's four states: Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

All changes in Board membership and officers are reflected in the Board member listing included as part of the agenda for each quarterly meeting. Minutes of all Board meetings held in the prior quarter are also included in these agendas. Since OERI's institutional liaison is provided a copy of the AEL Board agenda prior to each quarterly Board meeting, the government is regularly provided, in a timely manner, the required information regarding Board actions.

The fourth-quarter 1991 meeting of the AEL Board of Directors was held in Nashville, TN, on October 19-20. On October 18, Board members from Tennessee convened to continue the AEL needs assessment and planning process (a description of this meeting is presented in the following section, "Needs Assessment and Planning"). Events included in the third-quarter Board meeting were:

- The Executive Committee met from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon on October 19. Actions of this committee are reported at each Board meeting, so they are recorded as part of the Board meeting's minutes.

- Board members convened on October 19 for meetings of the program advisory committees for the Classroom Instruction; Colleges and Schools; School Governance and Administration; State Policy; Community Liaison to Urban Education; Information Services; Rural Excel; and Rural, Small Schools programs. Written reports of these advisory committee meetings are attached to the Board meeting's minutes, and they are provided as Appendix B of this report.

- During breakfast on October 20, Board members were seated at separate tables by state so that they could focus on AEL's work in their own states. These state groups of the Board (called state caucuses) reported on their discussions during the business session, which was held on October 20 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. All actions taken at the business session are reported in the official Board meeting minutes.

Management

The AEL Management Team is made up of the Lab's key personnel. Meetings of this group are held regularly to ensure coordination of the program/project work and to plan for Labwide events such as the quarterly Board meetings. During this quarter, five meetings of the Management Team were held.

The development of plans for AEL's restructuring has proceeded throughout this year. Information was presented in the third-quarter report on work of the AEL Future Committee to develop plans for the final phase of AEL's restructuring. At the October 20 meeting, Board members approved the AEL Future Committee's recommendations for proposed (1) interim corporate goals for October 1991 through April 1992, (2) a safety net level for the same period, and (3) specific processes for the Executive Committee's evaluation of the AEL executive director.

The corporate restructuring that began with Board approval in January 1991 of initial changes is continuing. Management staff are preparing to implement the new responsibility/reporting structures effective December 1, 1991, as FY 92 begins. There will remain, however, a great many changes to be implemented. A master listing has been completed of all new and revised positions resulting from the implementation of this restructuring. To the extent possible, all these personnel actions will be completed during the second quarter of FY 92. Other changes resulting from the FY 91 restructuring--major personnel and fiscal policy review and revision, for example--may not be fully implemented even in FY 92.

Needs Assessment and Planning

AEL proposed a new approach to needs assessment and planning in the 1991-95 period. The approach involves a database (called News-Scan) and planning meetings of host state officials, Board members, and AEL staff held in conjunction with the quarterly meetings of the AEL Board.

The News-Scan database includes all the education-related articles from four major newspapers in member states: It exists in both user-friendly computer form and in hard copy files. The News-Scan Bulletin provides Board members and policymakers information about regional trends and issues synthesized from the database. During the third quarter, the News-Scan computer program was completed and put into operation on two different computers at AEL. Given the completion of the first four quarters of the topical descriptor assignments by staff and the very satisfactory results in the intra- and interrater reliability study of descriptor assignments by all assignors, a new staff member was provided training and coaching in the process and given the task of assigning the descriptors to the articles for three states. Other staff members will assign descriptors to the articles from the fourth state.

The planning process was implemented for the first time at the Kentucky Board meeting in April. The chair of the Kentucky State Caucus summarized the outcomes of the process at the Board's business session. AEL staff used that report as the basis for developing a written report to the Board on the planning implications of the process. That report was shared with all participants in the process and the full Board. The planning process was repeated, with some modifications, in conjunction with the July Board of Directors' meeting in Williamsburg, VA. Modifications included references to a display table of selected Lab products, a folio of background materials, and a discussion of process in a respective state caucus meeting. Again, AEL staff prepared a report to the Board on the planning implications of the process in Virginia. That report was accepted by the full Board in their fourth quarterly meeting.

The quarterly planning process was repeated, again with a modification, in conjunction with the October Board of Directors' meeting in Nashville, TN. After a luncheon, the state planning meeting regarding educational reform in Tennessee was held from 2-5 pm. The modification in the Tennessee process was that key AEL staff held a debriefing session immediately following the state planning meeting to discuss the process to that point. Numerous suggestions for changes were voiced by AEL staff. As in Kentucky and Virginia before, the chair of the Tennessee State Caucus delivered an oral report to the full Board on the outcomes of the state planning meeting. AEL staff are following up with participants with phone calls and other communications. AEL staff will prepare a report to the Board on the implications for planning of the process in Tennessee.

TASK 2: ASSIST EFFORTS TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES, ESPECIALLY FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS

Classroom Instruction Program

For FY 91, the Classroom Instruction (CI) program conducts four activities, responsive primarily to Task 2, Assist Efforts to Improve Educational Outcomes, Especially for At-Risk Students.

Activity 1: Communications

CI staff published a four-page "Focus on Instruction" insert for The Link. Jacklin Romeo, West Virginia Education Association (WVEA) representative to the CI Program Advisory Committee of the AEL Board of Directors, coordinated contributions from 10 West Virginia educators. Staff analyzed and summarized for the annual report FY 91 the 48 responses to the "1991 Focus on Instruction Readership Survey" distributed in the third quarter issue.

Three editions of "R & D Notes" were sent to all four state teacher association journal editors, presidents, and Instruction and Professional Development (IPD) staff representatives.

An article announcing replications of AEL training on Parent Involvement was published in the September issue of KEA News, the Kentucky Education Association's (KEA) journal.

The September, October, and November issues of the WV School Journal, journal of WVEA, each contained an article on shared decisionmaking, part of a continuing series of monthly columns prepared by CI staff for this publication.

The October issue of VEA News, a Virginia Education Association publication, carried an announcement of the formation of a new VEA-AEL study group on performance-based assessment and an application for membership in the group.

AEL and program awareness materials were prepared by CI staff for dissemination at eight events--one in Kentucky, four in Virginia, and three in West Virginia. A total of 276 participants in CI training events and study groups, educator association conferences, and other professional meetings received information on AEL and CI programs, services, and products.

CI staff made more than 579 contacts with educators during the fourth quarter. Four hundred-sixty-eight of these responses to information requests were made to educators in AEL's four-state Region (Kentucky, 57; Tennessee, 45; Virginia, 181; and West Virginia, 185). CI staff corresponded with 111 individuals and organizations outside the Region.

Activity 2: Training

CI staff began development of "Linking the Disciplines: A Holistic Approach to Curriculum Design," one of 17 School Excellence Workshops

(SEW) offered as training-for-trainer workshops throughout the Region. Extensive editing necessary in the completion of two study group products this quarter delayed completion and submission of the draft workshop package until December 30. The final version of the workshop package will be submitted during the first quarter FY 92. However, CI staff developed and distributed the executive summary and one-page descriptive flyer on the package in two state training planning meetings conducted by CI and SGA staff during the quarter.

The Tennessee training planning meeting with representatives from several educator associations, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDE), and CI and SGA directors was held on September 9 in Nashville. The 17 SEW packages were discussed and "Focusing on Motivation" was selected for a March 22-23, 1992, training-for-trainers to be conducted for approximately 50 educators at the Scarritt-Bennett Conference Center in Nashville. Much interest was expressed in presenting "Linking the Disciplines..." as a second training-for-trainers workshop in 1992. Ten regional representatives and their supervisor of the Virginia Department of Education (VDE) met November 12 in Richmond with CI and SGA staffs to discuss training-for-trainers, workshop topics, and other program projects and resources. Multiple-region training-for-trainers events are now being coordinated for early spring 1992. The CI-developed "Teacher as Decision-maker: Empowerment in the Classroom and in the School" and "Linking the Disciplines..." have emerged as topics of choice among regions.

Three meetings of trainers involved in presenting West Virginia regional training-for-trainer workshops of "Enhancing Schools through Local School Improvement Councils (SIC): A Special Issue Seminar" were conducted by CI staff during the quarter. CI staff finalized masters for the AEL-developed training manuals that were printed by the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE), arranged panel presentations by successful SIC representatives, copied expendable handouts, coordinated display materials, and handled all correspondence with trainers, panel members, and keynote presenters. CI staff also served as presenters (joined by WVDE, WVEA, and SGA representatives) at the two training events held September 27-28 in Morgantown for 26 participants and in Barboursville for 33 participants. Participants, cadres of five School Improvement Council members--parent, community/business representative, teacher, principal, and school service personnel--from each district in the Regional Education Service Agency regions invited to each training were trained to conduct workshops to improve communication skills, planning, and decisionmaking of their own and other Councils in their district. CI staff summarized participant evaluation data and provided these to trainers and the Training Planning Consortium, representatives of cosponsors West Virginia Association of School Administrators, WVEA, and WVDE. Planning and coordination of panel presenters continued for two remaining Seminars in the series (December, Ripley; January, Beckley). The Seminar planned for RESA VIII districts to be held November 15-16 in Martinsburg was cancelled by WVDE.

Katherine Lovell, the Colleges and Schools institutional contact for West Virginia University, presented an AEL awareness session for 50 leaders of WVEA's Student Organization at their conference in Morgantown on November 16. She distributed 50 packets of information on AEL and the CI program that were prepared by CI staff.

Jim Caruth, VEA UniServ director based in Prince George, VA, presented an AEL awareness session in Blackstone, VA, on November 4 for 35 participants of the Prince Edward County Phi Delta Kappa chapter. CI staff provided information packets, transparencies, and videotapes on study groups and SEW workshops.

Beth Nelson, former AEL Board member and retired teacher educator, presented an AEL awareness session for 17 Pulaski County (VA) Education Association building representatives on October 21 and a second requested awareness session for 20 Pulaski County High School English teachers on October 30. CI staff provided packets, videotapes, and transparencies for her use at both.

The CI training specialist conducted two workshops at the National Education Association's Center for Innovation Symposium in Colorado Springs, CO, on November 8. Twenty-two educators from around the United States attended "School Councils: Getting Everyone on Board the Same Train," and 33 educators participated in "Linking School and Community," copresented by NWREL staff.

Activity 3: Study Groups

The Tennessee Education Association (TEA)-AEL Educational Technology Study Group completed editing of the first and second drafts of their product during the quarter. The publication, tentatively titled Bits, Bytes, and Barriers: Tennessee Teachers' Use of Technology, is being reviewed by an external expert on technology, the association president and staff involved with the study group, and the AEL writer and deputy executive director. It is being submitted in draft form. CI staff plan to incorporate changes, complete typesetting and layout, and provide masters of the document and announcement flyer to TEA and to AEL's Resource Center in December 1991. Data from the study, a survey of Tennessee teacher instructional use of computers and other educational technology, was incorporated in the TEA report to Bell South regarding the association's utilization of a $10,000 grant. Bell South grant monies have paid study group members' mileage and accommodation needs for meeting attendance and funded a classroom of the future at TEA and a statewide conference on technology.

The VEA-AEL Study Group on the Quality of Teacher Working Conditions, the VEA president and IPD director, an external expert, and the AEL writer and deputy executive director reviewed the final draft of Surviving the Worst, Expecting the Best: Teacher Perceptions of Work Life in Virginia Schools following CI staff melding of all study group member copy and first draft changes during the quarter. The document and announcement flyer were then typeset by AEL staff and masters of both were provided to VEA and to AEL's Resource Center for distribution. VEA plans a news release and news conference to announce the findings and has described the results of the focus group interviews conducted by study group members with teachers around Virginia in their December issue of the Virginia Journal of Education. The product is being submitted to OERI. Copies will be provided to the Communication Service Assistance Program (CSAP) network and to the ERIC Clearinghouses in December.

Members of the WVEA-AEL Study Group on Evaluating and Documenting Projects of Assistance to At-Risk Students, members of the WVEA IPD Committee, and two WVEA UniServ directors were the 11 participants in the Program Evaluation and Documentation Training conducted by CI staff on October 4 at AEL. The training provided information on several qualitative methods of documenting and evaluating educational programs. Study group members, each representing one WVEA grant-funded project of assistance to at-risk students, then discussed and selected appropriate evaluation/documentation methods with faculties at project sites in their districts. IPD Committee members followed up the training by identifying appropriate methods for WVEA monitoring of the five project sites and dissemination of information about successes. Unfortunately, due to lack of WVEA project resources ($1,000/project) and interested personnel, this study group disbanded in November. CI staff will continue technical assistance via correspondence on documentation and evaluation upon request.

AEL's Resource Center distributed at cost 173 copies of the program's study group publications upon requests from educators in 35 states. Copies of 13 separate titles were requested including 64 copies of Teaching Combined Grade Classes: Real Problems and Promising Practices. The KEA-CI study group publication Ungraded Primary Programs: A Step Toward Developmentally Appropriate Instruction and the TEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Resource Packet #1: What Is Site-Based Decisionmaking?, products of 1990 study group, were announced in the June and August issues, respectively, of the CSAP of the network of Labs and Centers.

Activity 4: Technical Assistance

Two Project TEACH volunteer orientations for representatives of business and community organizations were conducted with the Chamber of Commerce, Kanawha County (WV) Schools (KCS), and CI staff presenters on September 6 and September 13 in Charleston. Project TEACH, a program in which half-day sessions presented for K-12 students by business volunteer teachers release classroom teacher for inservice workshops, began Phase II with inservice training on process writing for secondary English teachers and on a new civics curriculum for ninth grade social studies teachers. A total of more than 900 sessions will be taught by volunteers during the 1992-93 school year as secondary English, social studies, and business education teachers attend inservice sessions. Chamber staff began one-hour orientations in late September for volunteers at individual company sites resulting in volunteer coverage for all fall and spring inservice sessions.

The CI training specialist met on October 8 in Charleston with the Capital High School (KCS) Community Service Advisory Council.

As Parent/Community Involvement Researcher on the NEA/IBM School Renewal Network that links educators in restructuring schools, universities, and selected Labs, the CI training specialist entered 29 papers or responses to online information requests made by educators around the nation. She also participated in School Renewal Network meetings as an NEA-sponsored participant at the NEA's Center for Innovation Symposium during November 7-11 in Colorado Springs, CO.

School Governance and Administration Program

For FY 91, the School Governance and Administration (SGA) program conducts five activities responsive primarily to Task 2, Assist Efforts to Improve Educational Outcomes, Especially for At-Risk Students.

Activity 1: Information Dissemination

The purpose of this service delivery strategy is to help school administrators and school board members, their associations, and Leadership in Educational Administration Development (LEAD) Centers become more informed about current research and practice. Activities conducted during this quarter include the following: "SGA Exchange," "LEAD News in the Region," "R & D Notes," and information resource packets. Tennessee's administrator association selected a Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking (QUILT) update and educational reform as the theme for this quarter's issue of the "SGA Exchange." "LEAD News," a three-page memo, was sent to the LEAD directors, along with 31 new resources for them to share with their clients. The 21 members of the Kentucky LEAD Policy Advisory Committee receive monthly mailings, as do the SGA Program Advisory Committee members. This quarter, approximately 50 resource materials were sent to these groups. During this quarter, approximately 12 resource materials were sent to Kentucky beginning superintendents and mentors. QUILT coordinators and trainers received 37 new resources.

Activity 2: Training

SGA and the Classroom Instruction (CI) programs assisted in planning and conducting two training-for-trainers workshops on "Enhancing Schools Through Local School Improvement Councils: A Special Issue Seminar" in two locations in West Virginia for 59 members of local school improvement councils representing 13 counties. This training-for-trainers was cosponsored by AEL and three other agencies, with a cadre of six trainers representing the department of education, the teachers' association, and the SGA and CI programs. The keynote speaker for the first training was Gary Marx, associate executive director, American Association of School Administrators; Keith Geiger, president, National Education Association, was keynoter for the second training. Both keynote speakers and the entire second training session were videotaped to be used in preparing a videotape on school governance and local school improvement councils after all training sessions are completed. In November, SGA and CI held a planning session with the Virginia Department of Education to discuss AEL workshops and QUILT.

Activity 3: Field Test of QUILT

Implementation of QUILT. During this quarter, all 13 field test sites, having conducted the induction training in their A and B schools, began the Collegiums in their A schools. SGA staff conducted telephone interviews with trainers and coordinators.

SGA staff made one site visit and plans, during the next fiscal year, to visit the other 12 field test sites to gather information about the school and district that may help staff interpret the data. We are looking for contextual variables that will help us understand how QUILT is being received, how teachers are accepting the QUILT program, and what kind of support is being offered by administrators in the school and district.

Evaluation results. Work continued on the analysis of pretests from spring 1991. Much work was done on cleaning up data that were entered last quarter. The coding of the videotapes was completed and a method for entering the data was designed. Data entry and analysis of the videotapes will continue next quarter.

The evaluations of the induction training were analyzed this quarter. Jack Barnette, QUILT researcher and evaluator, completed a report on these data and submitted it to the SGA Advisory Committee at the October Board meeting. The following are some remarks excerpted from that report:

> During the week of June 16-21, 1991, QUILT training was provided to 44 QUILT coordinators and trainers.... It is clear that the perceptions of the participants were very positive. Comments made on the evaluation forms were very complimentary and indicated that even though the participants felt they had a lot to do to get ready for onsite training, they were enthusiastic and committed to the implementation of QUILT in their schools.
>
> During August 1991, participating sites have conducted induction training.... These results indicate very positive evaluations of the induction training. Looking at the pattern of evaluation responses across the A and B condition schools, there is very close agreement on the evaluation results. This indicates that induction training was received as well by both condition groups. Since both condition groups were intended to have the same level of induction training, the fact that the evaluation results are so similar provides evidence that they did get similar levels of induction training.
>
> QUILT training has been viewed as having been very successful for coordinators and trainers as well as participants in the induction training. Comments made by participants have been very positive.

Training QUILT trainers. Two meetings were held this quarter with some of the lead trainers from the field test sites. The first meeting was held in Charleston, WV, on October 23-24. Eight districts sent at least one representative. The second meeting was held in Giles County, TN, on November 14; the three Tennessee districts had representatives at that meeting. Two districts were unable to attend either meeting.

The major purpose of the meetings was to review Collegiums 3 through 7 with facilitators. Other purposes were as follows: (1) to share successes and problems to date in the implementation of QUILT, (2) to continue to network between QUILT districts, (3) to articulate a vision for QUILT in each district, and (4) to give districts an update on the research and a preview of what is planned for 1992-93. The meetings were very successful, as confirmed by the completed evaluation forms.

Additional field test site. A school district in Lumberton, NC, joined the field test this fall as a special treatment condition. Eight members of a high school faculty are participating. Each completed all of the pretests, including the 15-minute videotaped lesson. As a group, these teachers participated in the three-hour awareness session plus the seven Collegiums and Practicums. This special condition will give us a fourth variation of a model for staff development.

Planning for next year. Much work has been done this quarter in thinking about the research design for the 1992-93 school year. SGA staff have met with AEL staff, representatives of associations, and outside consultants to consider the important questions to be asked in the continued field test of QUILT.

Additionally, we have begun to recruit districts to participate next year. In each state, we are pursuing a different strategy to get nominations and applications for the QUILT field test. In Tennessee, we requested nominations from TASSA, the umbrella administrators' association. The 20 nominated districts were invited to a special presentation about QUILT on October 20 in Nashville, TN, in conjunction with the AEL Board meeting. Seven QUILT trainers helped SGA staff present the information to the invited district guests.

In Virginia, AEL staff and two QUILT trainers from Virginia presented information about QUILT to the Virginia Department of Education's regional representatives and requested nominations of potential districts for next year. Additionally, this group made a presentation to the director of the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, who was to share the information with representatives from seven other associations of school administrators.

In West Virginia, AEL staff have made presentations to representatives from the West Virginia Department of Education, the Professional Development Center, and the West Virginia Education Fund. In January, a presentation will be made to invited district representatives.

In Kentucky, AEL staff presented to the 55-member Board of the Kentucky Association of School Administrators requesting nominations for next year. Two Kentucky field test sites made videotapes that were shown at that presentation.

Activity 4: Professional Development and Technical Assistance

No new study groups were begun this quarter, because SGA is not scheduled to form any new study groups until the next fiscal year. We anticipate that the study groups of administrators and possibly teachers will develop out of the QUILT Staff Development Program and will examine issues such as the impact of the QUILT program on student achievement in the field test school districts as well as the new school districts for 1992-93. SGA program staff continued to provide technical assistance and broker information via phone, FAX, letters, and by responding to information requests.

Activity 5: Networking and Collaboration

The AEL Network of Schools is a loosely organized group of 41 schools and school districts. Membership is voluntary with six members from Kentucky, 10 from Tennessee, 12 from Virginia, and 13 from West Virginia. The purpose of the Network is to share information, experiences, and expertise on a variety of educational topics. Results from an August mailing in which member schools were asked to select two out of seven topics that seemed most relevant are as follows: Authentic Assessment of Student Progress, 23; Nongraded Primary, 17; Restructuring Secondary Schools, 13; Heterogeneous Grouping, 8; Leadership and Empowerment, 7; Early Childhood Education, 6; and Schools of Choice, 1. Based on survey results and other identified interests, three areas will be identified.

Audiotapes, supplemented with written summaries, bibliographies, and ERIC searches, will be used as the primary method of disseminating information about the three priorities selected for emphasis. This is a pilot study to evaluate the effectiveness of audiotapes as a means of sharing information.

Network members have received two mailings. The first announced the results of the selection of topics, identified Authentic Assessment of Student Progress and Year-Round Education as two of the three topics to be emphasized, shared articles about assessment, and solicited members' assistance in identifying a third topic (Nongraded Primary or Restructuring Secondary Schools). The second mailing was the first audiotape, Conversations about Year-Round Education, accompanied by a short brochure. Practitioners from four states and the executive director of the National Association for Year-Round Education were interviewed for the tape. In early December, an evaluation form will follow up the audiotape mailings. All 41 Network members plus 50 other administrators and association executive directors/presidents in the Region will be asked to participate in the pilot test.

Staff maintained telephone contacts with clients. Program staff received 210 incoming calls from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia; 35 calls were received from within the state. Staff made approximately 300 outgoing calls to educators in the Region. GARs and other documentation by staff indicated that 1,543 contacts (via letters, phone calls, and meetings) occurred with educators in the Region.

Colleges and Schools Program

The Colleges and Schools (C & S) program serves as AEL's primary link with the Region's institutions of higher education. This program's linkage is established through the four state affiliates of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE).

Work of the program is directed, during 1991-95, toward the accomplishment of two primary objectives:

- Objective #1: To provide information about, and access to, innovative materials and procedures for improving education at all levels to an increasing number of faculty in state ACTE-member institutions.
- Objective #2: To foster the creation of college-school partnerships that are devoted to improving the quality of preservice professional preparation and/or the quality of education provided by local schools.

This work is to be carried out through three ongoing activities.

Activity 1: Minigrants

Eleven of the 12 Minigrant reviewers, nominated by the program advisory committee (PAC), along with PAC members participated in an October 20-21 Minigrant Reviewer training conducted by the AEL evaluation specialist, AEL's writer, and the C & S director following the AEL Board meeting in Nashville. The training received positive evaluations and comments from Minigrant reviewers and committee members. After training/consensus reaching on example applications for each criterion of planning and project grants and individual rating of a model program to establish interrater reliability, Minigrant reviewers each completed rating forms on the 13 applications for grants they received in early October from C & S staff. Each application was read by three reviewers and one committee member. Committee members then used these ratings to allocate funds to the highest-rated applications.

Of the 52 Minigrant applications received for the second competition of FY 91, nine (three planning and six project applications) were funded by committee members for a total allocation of $19,305. The fourth quarter issue of "Dialogue," the program's insert to The Link, contained an announcement and brief description of the funded planning and project Minigrants. The Minigrant announcement/cover sheet will be revised for FY 92 in December and more than 1,000 copies will be mailed for distribution by the C & S institutional contacts in January. All Minigrant reviewers and applicants received notification of funded projects and program thanks in letters mailed in November.

Activity 2: Annual Working Conference

Following conference call planning by program advisory committee members and staff, the annual working conference was held on November 2-3 in Roanoke, VA, for 12 participants--ACTE/Colleges and Schools Committee members and advisory committee members. The conference included presentations by adopters/facilitators for the National Diffusion Network (NDN) projects that involve teacher educators--"Learning to Teach in Inner-City Schools" and "Classroom Organization for Effective Teaching"--and a brief NDN awareness session by the state facilitator for Virginia. Penny Earley, senior director for AACTE, presented "Perspectives on America 2000" using the Department of Education videotape on this initiative. She also conducted a "Knowing and Influencing Your Publics" workshop followed by individual state planning sessions with reports to the large group. The presentations and conference coordination were highly rated by participants. It was agreed that PAC members will discuss several initiatives suggested at their January meeting, including the development of a Regional policy statement on children and youth, and will review evaluation data on the conference.

Activity 3: Dissemination

C & S program/AEL awareness sessions were presented by the program director at meetings of the following ACTE state affiliates during the quarter: VACTE, September 30, Virginia Beach, VA, 50 participants; and WVACTE, October 14, Canaan Valley, WV, 20 participants. Dorothy Jenkins, representative for TACTE on AEL's Board, distributed 100 packets of information on C & S and AEL at the TACTE fall conference on October 31 in Nashville. A total of 190 packets of information on AEL and C & S were distributed during the quarter.

The program newsletter insert, "Dialogue," was distributed to the 115 program contacts, along with bulk shipments of AEL's quarterly newsletter, The Link. Total circulation to C & S program contacts for the quarter was 358. Program staff analyzed the 21 responses to the "Dialogue Readership Survey" included in the third quarter insert. Results are reported in the FY 91 annual report. Three issues of "R & D Notes" were mailed to 54 contacts at institutions of higher education throughout the Region.

Three state ACTE newsletters (KACTE "Communi-key," VACTE "Update," and WVACTE "News") were electronically typeset, copied, and included by AEL staff in bulk shipments to appropriate institutions during the quarter.

The C & S and Classroom Instruction program advisory committees held a joint session on October 19 during the AEL Board meeting to discuss collaboration between committees, state affiliates, and teachers and teacher educators. The six new initiatives suggested will be discussed with affiliate staff during first quarter FY 92 and are reported in the program appendix to this report. Members of both committees requested semiannual joint meetings in conjunction with AEL Board meetings.

"Fostering Change Through College-School Collaborative Minigrants," a presentation proposal by the C & S director for the 1992 AACTE Annual Meeting, was accepted as part of a juried paper session to be presented in late February in San Antonio, TX. Survey data reporting the extent of enduring collaboration between college and school partners in AEL Minigrants funded between 1985 and 1991 will be collected, analyzed, and summarized for the paper during the first quarter, FY 92.

There were 297 contacts with C & S clients, including annual conference calls and mailings, correspondence with Minigrant reviewers and applicants, memoranda to ACTE contacts, and responses to information requests during the fourth quarter.

State Policy Program

The State Policy program conducts four activities responsive to Task 2--Assist Efforts to Improve Educational Outcomes, Especially for At-Risk Students. These include conducting Policy Seminars, organizing and operating a Policy Support Roundtable, developing Policy Information Resources, and providing a special Kentucky Brokering Service.

Activity 1: Policy Seminars

- The regional Policy Seminar, with the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) and Danforth, was conducted November 10-12 in Nashville. Nearly 70 state and local decisionmakers joined staff and presenters for the three-day discussion of systemic reform. The agenda included time for state groups of participants to discuss education reform in their states in the context of systemic reform. Other small-group discussions included concurrent sessions on coherent learning environments: alternatives to tracking by David Reuman of Trinity (CT) College; coherent approaches to children's service integration by Ronnie Dunn of Kentucky's Cabinet for Human Resources; coherent approaches to professional development by Willis Hawley of Vanderbilt; integrating curriculum, assessment, and instructional materials by Doris Redfield of the Virginia Department of Education; and finance and systemic reform by Allan Odden of CPRE, University of Southern California. Large-group sessions featured David Hornbeck, consultant to Kentucky and The Business Roundtable, who talked about state systemic reform and the national reform agenda; and a panel of state and local decisionmakers representing West Virginia and Tennessee, who responded to questions posed by Dick Elmore about the tensions between bottom-up and top-down education reform. Diane Ravitch, assistant secretary and counselor to the U. S. Secretary of Education, closed the seminar with a discussion of the national goals and the administration's America 2000 education reform strategy.

  The regional event is being evaluated through a post-event process used in the past by AEL's State Policy program. Evaluation forms are being mailed to participants. A stamped, return envelope is included for the form's return to AEL. Each of the state groups of participants expressed interest in followup meetings to continue the discussions begun in Nashville. The evaluation asks participants to comment on potential roles for AEL, CPRE, or Danforth in the followup discussions. Results of the evaluation will be reported in the FY 92 first-quarter report.

Activity 2: Policy Support Roundtable

- Key staff to legislators, governors, and Chief State School Officers participated in the AEL/CPRE/Danforth seminar. This participation was in lieu of a separate roundtable meeting for FY 91.

Activity 3: Policy Information Resources

- The FY 91 program plan calls for the State Policy program to produce two issue papers, three issue packets, and four "Policy Briefs" under Activity 3. Work in the fourth quarter was directed toward completion of the two papers, production of one remaining packet, and publication of a fourth "Policy Brief."
- The program's two issue papers focus on separate chronologies of the reorganization of the Virginia and Kentucky departments of education. In an October 9 telephone conversation, Carol Mitchell, AEL's institutional liaison at OERI, approved postponing delivery of the two issue papers until year's end, with final copy due the end of the first quarter (FY 92).
- The topic of the remaining issue packet for FY 91 grows out of the discussion at the October 20 advisory committee meeting. The discussion focused on two topics--accountability and state assistance to low-performing school districts. The accountability issue packet will be delivered in FY 91.
- The fourth issue of "Policy Briefs" for FY 91 is on systemic education reform.

Activity 4: Kentucky Brokering Service

- Official implementation of the Kentucky Brokering Service is on hold for FY 91 at the request of Thomas Boysen, Kentucky's new commissioner of education.

Community Liaison to Urban Education Program

The Community Liaison to Urban Education (CLUE) program, formerly the Regional Liaison Center, is designed to initiate and sustain active involvement of nonadvantaged parents, community leaders, and community organizations in projects, activities, and events that build skills in areas key to educational success for large numbers of at-risk children and students identified within the Region.

The objectives of CLUE are accomplished through implementation of four carefully planned activities.

Activity 1: Preparing Targeted Products

- Program staff continue work on culturally specific materials. The African-American children's stories, designed for bibliotherapeutic purposes, have been completed by Renee Hill. Prototypes of the five characters have been sketched and approved for inclusion in the stories.

- Two manuals, "How to Conduct An Effective Meeting" and "Making Cultural Diversity Work," have been completed and formatted for desktop publishing. The materials will be placed in the field for comment and peer review.

- The office of Multi-Cultural Affairs at Marshall University (WV); the Humanities Council of West Virginia; the Alliance For the Collection, Preservation, and Dissemination of West Virginia Black History; and CLUE staff cooperated to transcribe, produce, and copy the proceedings of two annual Black history conferences held in Huntington, WV. The West Virginia Humanities Foundation provided the CLUE program with $1,500 to defray some of the cost of reproducing the results of this three-year collaborative research and oral history effort.

- Staff conducted a national search for programs designed to create all male African-American schools, and articles written by African-American scholars addressing issues of the educational status of Black males. The conference committee selected, and staff reproduced and disseminated 200 copies of, the document at the Tennessee Black Caucus Annual Retreat in Knoxville, TN.

Activity 2: Convening Groups

CLUE's program director attends local, state, regional, and national meetings; collaborates and/or cooperates with organizations and community groups to convene meetings and conferences; and makes workshop/seminar presentations to provide information, technical assistance, and relevant training where appropriate.

Fourth-quarter events were:

- Conducted a 20-county regional parent training conference (West Tennessee) at Dyersburg State Community College on September 13-14, 1991. Staff collaborated with the West Tennessee African-American Affairs Council to assemble 67 parents for the day and a half conference. Dorothy Jeffries of Memphis, TN, and Karen Bowyer conducted minisessions of planning for personal growth and parenting skills. The director conducted a needs assessment for further planning with the parents.

- Responded to a request from Senator Gerald Neal of Kentucky to assist in providing opportunities for grass roots parents to attend a conference in Louisville, KY—What Works in Educational Reform: An African-American Perspective--sponsored by the National Caucus Of Black State Legislators; the Kentucky Education Association; the universities of Louisville, Kentucky, and Kentucky State; and the Kentucky Education Reform: African-American Council. CLUE supported 20 parents and five minority educators from West Virginia and the immediate Louisville area. CLUE staff convened a meeting for the community resource sponsors of educational programs at the Chandler Elementary School in Charleston, WV.

- Presented Orchard Manor demonstration model to approximately 200 conferees as a model for working with and through high-risk communities to achieve educational change and improvement.

- CLUE staff and representatives from West Virginia State College; West Virginia Departments of Health, Human Services; the College of Graduate Studies; the South Charleston Impact for Life; Shawnee Hills Rehabilitation Center; the Kanawha Valley Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation; and the Governor's Drug Free Communities program cosponsored a Grant Writing Workshop on Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention at West Virginia State College on November 13-15, 1991. The CLUE program sponsored seven minority leaders and parents from across the state to attend the three-day conference.

  The director conducted four minisessions on goal inferencing and needs assessment strategies for 60 conferees at the grant writing conference.

Activity 3: Creating Demonstration Sites

Efforts to create a demonstration school site have been primarily focused on community activities designed to empower residents, alleviate community problems, and establish legitimacy of community intent with regard to interaction with school personnel.

- In compliance with a $40,000 grant from the Housing and Urban Development Office (HUD), resident council members have secured office space in the housing complex. Further, council followed through on a longstanding request to city officials to have a traffic light installed for increased safety for their children.

  A gatehouse has also been installed and activated with Orchard Manor residents manning the gate with the assistance of the Charleston police on a limited basis. Results are noteworthy in that drug trafficking, incidents of violence, and drug arrests have decreased markedly. Council members also report the upswing in the number of elderly residents now walking outdoors in the complex.

  The Housing and Urban Development agency had provided several training events for members of the council in preparation for a more complex level of responsibility. When it becomes feasible, the Orchard Manor Resident Council could become the managing unit for the housing complex.

- Committee members have given assistance to the Council in writing a second grant to the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation for funds to purchase a set of World Encyclopedia for the library in Orchard Manor.

- Subcommittee members and council members conducted a walking door-to-door survey of the Black and white communities of the Chandler school attendance area to determine their satisfaction with the intent to close Chandler as a part of a consolidation plan. Based on an 80 percent disapproval, parents were successful in a petition to the Board of Education to exempt Chandler from the consolidation plan.

- Media publicity about the changes occurring in the complex and the positive response to parents from the school board appear to have created a new and very positive attitude from school personnel, as well as a marked increase in the attendance at PTA meetings. Attendance increased from 5 to 40 to 77 parents in three meeting periods.

- Committee met with Resident Council members and the principal of Chandler Elementary School on September 15, 1991, to discuss the first steps in officially naming the school and the Orchard Manor housing complex as the demonstration site. Attendant to this process will be the development of an evaluation process that is acceptable to all parties concerned and is appropriate for the improvement activity.

Activity 4: Dissemination of Information

Staff prepare, produce, and disseminate information by request, and by need, to assist and advise clients through research syntheses, newspaper clips, and specialized booklets and packets.

- Staff produced and disseminated three sets of 100 booklets for the state conferences of the National Association For The Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Each booklet contained five articles and at least 30 newspaper clips (state-related) and represented more than 10,000 individual pieces of information. The document, titled "Newsworthy Issues in Education and Equal Rights," was mailed to established clients and to individuals who perhaps did not know about AEL.

- Fifty sets of materials on test-wiseness skills were prepared for a workshop conducted by the director at the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority regional training meeting in Beckley, WV, on September 28, 1991.

- The fourth annual Black History Conference was held at Marshall University in Huntington, WV, in September. CLUE staff produced and disseminated 165 (400-page) history documents compiled from research and oral history presentations of historians. The final 135 documents have been readied for distribution to libraries, colleges/universities, and schools throughout West Virginia.

- Two hundred copies of a compilation of articles by national Black scholars on the educational status of African-American males were disseminated at the 17th Annual Tennessee Black Legislative Caucus Retreat held in Knoxville, TN, on November 6-10, 1991. Several state departments, having previously indicated an absence of the kind of information requested, have asked that a copy of the final document be provided to their offices.

- CLUE staff, as a result of cosponsoring two conferences in West Virginia (The Family Approach to Literacy and a Grant Writing Workshop on Drug and Alcohol Abuse), distributed 3,500 flyers announcing the conferences.

- The September, October, and November volumes of the Orchard Manor Newsline were produced for dissemination by council members. More than 1,000 newsletters were distributed.

- The director assembled and distributed 60 workshop packets during four minisessions on Needs Assessment and Writing Goals and Objectives at the Grant Writing workshop on November 14, 1991.

Rural, Small Schools Program

The Rural, Small Schools (RSS) program includes three activities: (1) technology in libraries, (2) dissemination, and (3) special technical assistance.

Activity 1: Technology in Libraries

- Todd Strohmenger and Berma Lanham presented a session on the use of technology in libraries to a group of superintendents and higher education faculty sponsored by the Clinch Valley College Office of the Virginia State Department of Education.

- Strohmenger and Lanham met with the director of libraries for Concord College and Bluefield State College (WV) for a second time to discuss library networking with schools in the region. Again the online cost for schools was stated as prohibitive. However, the director did agree to provide ERIC microfiche on interlibrary loan to schools in the region. He also agreed to provide copies of journal articles upon request.

- RSS staff discussed a library network for Mercer County Schools (WV) and Bluefield State College with the superintendent. A meeting with a district supervisor and a high school librarian resulted in the establishment of a beginning network involving three high schools and the college. The network will begin with ERIC on CD-ROM in each high school library. The college will expedite loan of microfiche and journal articles to these schools.

- The problem of allowing schools in West Virginia to be online with college libraries is still under investigation. The library at Braxton High School (WV) is presently online with a state library database and pays no fee other than telephone charges. RSS staff are attempting to arrange a meeting with state library officials to clarify the issue.

- RSS staff will also be investigating library holdings on CD-ROM. If college library catalogs in West Virginia could be placed on CD-ROM, rural schools could have access without the problems of rural telephone lines and charges. This will be a topic of discussion when staff meet with state library officials.

- Strohmenger and Lanham presented two sessions regarding library networking at the 12th annual Upper East Tennessee Educational Cooperative's Educators' Inservice at East Tennessee State University.

- Strohmenger and Lanham presented two sessions on using ERIC on CD-ROM in school libraries to faculty of the Danville (VA) schools. Participants were members of school staff development committees and will be replicating the workshop in their schools.

Activity 2: Dissemination

- RSS staff members Strohmenger, Lanham, and Phyllis Stowers attended the National Rural Education Association (NREA) conference in Jackson, MS.

- Strohmenger conducted a session at the conference regarding a collaborative effort with several organizations related to the role of rural schools providing integrated services in rural communities.

- Strohmenger attended a session of rural coordinators of the Regional Educational Laboratories to share information about rural projects in each Lab.

- Strohmenger, who is a member of the Legislative Committee of NREA, met with the committee during the conference.

- Strohmenger served as a delegate from West Virginia to the NREA Delegate Assembly.

- Strohmenger and Lanham presented a session on library networking at the NREA conference.

- Strohmenger met with staff of Research for Better Schools and members of the New Jersey Rural Advisory Committee regarding the AEL needs assessment process.

- Lanham and Strohmenger provided free ERIC searches for attendees at the NREA conference.

Activity 3: Special Technical Assistance

- Strohmenger and Lanham conducted a needs assessment conference for Giles County Schools (VA) involving selected faculty from each of the schools. This activity is a part of a school/business/industry partnership program of the district. RSS staff prepared a report of findings and will have the opportunity to compare results with other studies of need conducted with the business community.

- Strohmenger and Lanham conducted a needs assessment conference for Mecklinburg County Schools (VA) at the request of the Longwood College Regional Office of the Virginia State Department of Education.

Information Services Program

The purposes of the Information Services program are: (1) to provide clients and staff access to state-of-the-art information on education issues, (2) to respond to clients' general requests for R & D-based assistance, and (3) to provide the Laboratory staff and Board of Directors with timely information about emerging regional educational needs and about AEL's performance as a Regional Educational Laboratory contractor. The program addresses these purposes through the four activities described below.

The Information Services Advisory Committee convened in Nashville, TN, on October 19. Items discussed include procedures for advising this project after the December 1 Laboratory reorganization, the forthcoming special issue of The Link that focuses on math/science instruction, and the activities of the third-party evaluator, the Western Michigan University Evaluation Center. A summary of the advisory committee meeting is provided in Appendix B.

Activity 1: Operate the AEL Resource Center

- During this quarter, requests to the Resource Center (RC) for free materials totaled 403 and resulted in the dissemination of 2,540 documents. There were 147 information search requests processed.

- RC staff include a "Resource Center Free Materials Evaluation Form" with each set of requested materials. During this quarter, 72 percent of the respondents indicated that they had used RC services before, while 28 percent indicated that they were first-time users. On a 0-50 scale of satisfaction for the four items of ease in obtaining materials, RC responsiveness, AEL/RC credibility, and usefulness of materials, respondents rated the RC at 48.45, 48.45, 46.91, and 43.00 respectively.

- A Resource Center Open House was held on November 22 to familiarize staff with the three user-friendly databases now available to them in the RC: Resource Center Holdings, News-Scan, and Communication Service Assistance Program (CSAP).

- Staff received and incorporated into the RC database three sets of CSAP blurbs. Staff assembled the CSAP blurbs into three sets of "R & D Notes" for distribution to the Region's educators and policymakers.

- Staff responded also to various requests from school districts and others for technical assistance in analyzing school improvement problems:

  - Merrill Meehan and John Sanders met with officials of the Virginia Department of Education and of Carroll County (VA)

Public Schools to discuss a collaborative school improvement venture. Through an RFP circulated internally at the department, the state education agency has assembled a team of 10 experts who will assist Carroll County in developing a "world-class school system." Since this effort is conceived as a model process for restructuring a rural school district, AEL agreed to assist in designing and implementing an evaluation of this undertaking. As planning proceeds and the responsibilities of all parties become clear, AEL staff will develop a project plan for this activity.

- John Sanders met with officials from various West Virginia state agencies who are collaborating in the preparation of the proposal to operate a model apprenticeship project as part of the state's tech-prep program. Sanders' role was to advise on cost-effective approaches for evaluating the project. As a result of this meeting, the state has expressed interest in contracting with AEL to design the evaluation that goes into the proposal and to retain AEL as the third-party evaluator for the proposed project, if funded.

- Merrill Meehan and Kimberly Hambrick met with Mary Marockie, RESA VI (WV), and two of her staff to discuss strengths and weaknesses of various approaches to the evaluation of two school improvement projects currently operating in the five county school systems.

Activity 2: Produce The Link and Occasional Paper Series

Each year of this contract, AEL is to produce a quarterly newsletter, The Link, and at least one occasional paper. During this quarter, staff made substantial progress on each of these tasks.

- The fourth-quarter issue of The Link (Vol. 10, No. 4) is a special issue that focuses on math and science titled, "A Look at Mathematics and Science: Can the U.S. Be First by the Year 2000?" This issue was reviewed by Olivia Teel, mathematics coordinator, and Robert Seymour, science coordinator, Kanawha County (WV) Schools, and their suggestions were incorporated. The issue is 20 pages, rather than the usual 12. Therefore, a contract modification was approved by the Government Printing Office (GPO), and the printer contracted through the GPO met established deadlines. The fourth-quarter issue was mailed in late November and early December.

- Work continued on Occasional Paper 33, Making Connections II: Four Educational Perspectives, during the fourth quarter. As the required occasional paper for FY 91, the document was submitted to OERI in draft form during this quarter. Following feedback from the institutional liaison, staff finalized the document and printed 150 copies that will be provided free to participants in the Making Connections II symposium, as well as to educators who request it. As usual, the availability of this occasional paper will be advertised in The Link.

Activity 3: Provide Coordination for Tasks 1, 4, 5, and 6

The program provided an organizational home for those responsible for carrying out the four indicated tasks. Progress on the tasks is reported under the individual task numbers--1 (Needs Assessment and Planning component), 4, 5, and 6. During this quarter, staff designed and planned the draft annual report due to OERI by December 2. Staff also prepared a production schedule for the report and distributed it to all staff.

Activity 4: Dissemination

- There were five types of products disseminated during the fourth quarter: three issues of "R & D Notes"; two issues of the News-Scan Bulletin; prepackaged searches on choice, homework, and whole language approach; one issue of The Link; and Occasional Paper 33, Making Connections II: Four Educational Perspectives.

- There are three other Information Services products listed in the "FY 91 List of Products and Publications," but not discussed in previous quarterly reports:

  - First, the Regional Conference Proceedings/Newsletter that is to be produced following the Task 6 early childhood education conference. Since that conference was not held until mid-November, it seems likely that it will not be submitted in draft form for OERI review before the end of the next quarter.

  - Second, we understand that R & D Preview is being submitted to OERI by the contractor that produces it for the Laboratories and, therefore, that AEL is not required to formally submit separate copies of the publication to OERI.

  - Third, staff have determined that the kinds of products produced by the programs during FY 91 do not lend themselves to announcement by product bulletins produced by the Resource Center. The original idea of the bulletins was that the Resource Center would advertise groups of Lab products that address high-profile education themes. Staff are now looking at the possibility of publishing a product bulletin on its rural publications early in the next fiscal year and anticipate that the planned four product bulletins will be disseminated by the end of FY 92.

TASK 3: CONDUCT APPLIED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (R & D)

Rural Excel Program

The goal of the Rural Excel program is to conduct applied R & D projects that are designed to refine and test selected materials and procedures for improving student performance in rural, small schools. This report summarizes progress in the work of program committees and Activities 1 and 2.

Coordinating committee. Estel Mills, the Tennessee Department of Education representative on the Rural Excel Coordinating Committee, resigned upon his retirement. Tom Cannon, the newly appointed assistant commissioner for the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, agreed to serve on the coordinating committee with the understanding that, at the present time, his out-of-state travel would be limited.

Contact with committee members during this quarter included numerous phone calls and a personal visit by Rural Excel Program Director Robert Childers to three of the four states.

Program advisory committee. The AEL Board of Directors' advisory committee meeting for the Rural Excel program was held Saturday, October 19, 1991, at the Holiday Inn-Crowne Plaza in Nashville, TN. A copy of the minutes of the meeting is included in Appendix B.

Activity 1: Mathematics Instruction

The Activities Manuals project is presently the only project under Activity 1: Mathematics Instruction. It is a cooperative effort with the Center of Excellence for Science and Mathematics Education (CESME) at the University of Tennessee at Martin and the Tennessee State Department of Education.

The project's objectives are to:

- test a set of activities manuals designed to provide "hands-on" experiences, enhance discourse, and reduce exclusive reliance on textbooks in grades five through eight mathematics classrooms in rural areas;
- improve the achievement of students in rural classrooms in which teachers implement selected activities from the manuals; and
- assess other features of the classrooms in which teachers implement activities from the manuals, including students' attitudes toward mathematics and understanding of mathematical concepts, teachers' responses to use of activities, and teachers' responses to inservice training relevant to use of the activity manuals.

During the fourth quarter, the following work was accomplished:

- A completed draft of the Activities Manuals project plan was submitted for review to members of the AEL Board's Rural Excel Program Advisory Committee and Sue Boren, professor of mathematics and computer science at the University of Tennessee. While the reactions to the plan were very positive, Boren noted that the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) was computational based--not activity based--and that the test content was weak on geometry, and statistics and probability. However, it is the only achievement test data available on the students.

- Written agreements were negotiated between AEL and 21 participating schools in Tennessee. The agreements were signed by the teachers, principals, and Rural Excel program director. The teachers agreed to:

  - use a minimum of one activity from the Mathematics Activities Manual each week in each mathematics class;

  - administer questionnaires to students regarding their attitude toward mathematics, and the value of mathematics at selected times during the school year;

  - complete teacher questionnaires and opinionnaires during the school year; and

  - provide pre- and posttest mathematics achievement data on all students in the classes.

  AEL agreed to contribute $250 to each teacher to purchase manipulatives for use in the mathematics classes.

- Staff developed a Mathematics Attitude Scale and Mathematics Opinionnaire that have been administered to all students involved in the project. Each instrument contains 25 items that measure students' (1) perceptions of mathematics classes and (2) opinions about mathematics in the world outside school.

- A record for each student has been entered in an electronic database. Students' names and responses to the above questionnaires have already been recorded, as well as such background data as grade level, teacher name, and date of administration. As achievement data are reported, they will be added to each student's record. In other words, the database has been planned to contain all project data for each student in each classroom.

- A Mathematics Activity Class Log has been developed for the teachers to record the date, name of the activity, primary purpose of the activity, effectiveness rating, and comments on factors concerning the effectiveness during implementation. The teachers are maintaining a separate log for each math class.

- A Class Roster has been designed and provided to the teachers to record students' names, sex, and the students' mathematics scores on the TCAP. Students' performance on the spring 1991 administration will be utilized as the pretest. The TCAP will be administered again in spring 1992 as the posttest.

Activity 2: Early Childhood Education

The first R & D project in Activity 2 is called Family Connections. The objectives of the project are to:

- increase the number of communications between teachers and families of young children,
- increase the amount of time families spend with their young children on developmentally appropriate learning activities, and
- increase parental understanding of "developmentally appropriate" curriculum and activities in programs for young children.

The project has three major tasks:

- Develop and test instructional materials and processes for training early childhood teachers. These materials will have two major purposes: (a) to motivate teachers of young children to form partnerships with the families of their students and (b) to help teachers feel more comfortable in this new role of working with adults as well as children.
- Develop and test a series of family guides that will encourage families to (a) interact with their young children in developmentally appropriate ways and (b) communicate with their children's teachers. The guides will be sent into the homes on a weekly basis.
- Develop and test a set of instructional videotapes for families. The purpose of these videos and accompanying materials will be (a) to motivate families to become partners with the schools and teachers of their young children, (b) to help families understand the important role they play in their child's school success, (c) to encourage family members to see themselves as capable teachers of young children, (d) to provide information about how young children learn, and (e) to encourage discussion between and among teachers and other families. The videotapes are to be used in a group setting with the teacher serving as the facilitator. The videotapes would also be available for individual use either through the school or local video rental stores.

Accomplishments during the fourth quarter are:

- A draft project plan has been prepared and submitted to the early childhood specialist in each of the four state departments of education for review and critique. Three of the four have been returned with very positive comments.

- As part of Task 1, a one-day workshop for preschool coordinators and preschool teachers was developed and conducted November 15, 1991, at the Holiday Inn in Morehead, KY. The response to the workshop announcement was so great that not everyone could be accommodated. The workshop dealt with parent involvement with special emphasis on conducting home visits. Michele Plutro, recently appointed by the Department of Health and Human Services as a specialist in Head Start, was a consultant trainer for the workshop. Nine participants requested that they be considered as the test site for the Family Connections project. Evaluations by the participants were very positive.

- Two prototype family guides (Task 2 above) were produced and submitted to a group of preschool educators for their comments and suggestions. Their reactions were positive. The most common suggestion for improvement was "more pictures" and "less words."

- Interviews with a number of preschool experts were videotaped for future use in developing a set of videotapes for use with parents (Task 3). The experts included Sue Bredekamp, Willie Epps, Sharon Kagan, Oralie McAfee, and Maurice Sykes.

- Negotiated agreements were reached with key personnel in the Kentucky State Department of Education to test the Family Connections materials in a school system in Eastern Kentucky.

Study of State Policy Effects on Rural School Districts

Chapter 5.30 in AEL's June 18, 1990, technical proposal for operation of the Regional Educational Laboratory contract describes a project to study the implementation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA) in one rural school district. The supplemental to that proposal, submitted on September 13, 1990, expands the project by adding one staff member, thereby making it possible to study additional districts. The project is responsive to Task 3--Conduct Applied Research and Development.

The policy effects study is being carried out as part of the State Policy program's work and builds on a special project of AEL's Rural, Small Schools program that was undertaken in the final quarter of FY 90. The purpose of this qualitative research is to study the reform's implementation; to analyze the effects on rural school districts of large-scale changes in state policy; and to report policy-relevant information to policymakers, educators, and scholars on the consequences of the reform's implementation.

During the fourth quarter of FY 91, State Policy rural staff concentrated on several discrete tasks: (1) continuing field work in four Kentucky school districts to document implementation of KERA; (2) refining research questions, analyzing current data, and determining what findings are relevant to various policy audiences; and (3) continuing dissemination of preliminary findings of the study.

Field Work

AEL staff members Pamelia Coe and Patricia Kannapel now have formal permission to conduct a study of KERA implementation in four school districts from each of the three major regions of Kentucky (western, central, and eastern Kentucky), including one very small independent district. The pseudonyms of the districts are Lamont County (western), Vanderbilt County (central), Orange County (eastern), and Newtown Independent district. Kannapel has also maintained telephone contact with staff of the Humphrey County district in southeastern Kentucky, a district that had to be dropped from the study because of its distance from both field workers. One field visit has been made to Humphrey County to study its Family Resource Center (only one other district in the study has Family Resource Centers in place).

The Peer Review Panel that met in August strongly recommended that Coe and Kannapel focus on a few major provisions of the law, documenting other provisions only as they had opportunity. The five areas of focus currently are (1) the new nongraded primary program, (2) Family Resource Centers and Youth Services Centers (integrated social service and health service delivery, coordinated by the school), (3) curriculum changes in grades 4-12, (4) finances, and (5) changes in the authority structure of the school districts. Coe and Kannapel are focusing on one provision of the law currently relevant to policymakers in preparation for each quarterly issue of "Notes from the Field." Through September their primary focus was on school-based decisionmaking (and the establishment of a new authority structure in the School Councils). Since that time they have had two foci: finance (which they anticipate studying for six months before reporting out) and the Family Resource Centers and Youth Services Centers.

Visits to the four districts and to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) in Frankfort have centered around opportunities to learn more about the study's areas of focus. Both researchers have attended many School Council meetings, but neither has been able to attend all the meetings that have been held in their districts. They have discussed their findings with members of the councils whose meetings they have attended, as well as with the school principals (by law, chairpersons of the councils).

Staff members have met with central office staff in all four districts to obtain copies of the district budgets for the past three years. The two staff members plan to meet with the superintendents and school finance officers of their districts after they have analyzed the budgets in preparation for an issue of "Notes" dedicated to finance. They also have studied the finance section of KERA and met twice with staff of the state department of education to discuss the Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) finance formula mandated by KERA and currently in effect.

During the first week in November, Coe and Kannapel visited the Family Resource Centers and Youth Services Centers in all of the districts they have studied. Only two districts obtained funding for centers in the competition held during the spring and summer of 1991: Orange County, which now has two Family Resource Centers and one Youth Services Center; and Humphrey County, which has one Family Resource Center, led by members of a parent advocacy group in the county that works closely with the school district staff. The next issue of "Notes" will deal with the centers; the issue after that will deal with the finance formula.

In addition, both Coe and Kannapel have attended training sessions in their assigned districts on topics related to the study's foci. During September and October, Coe attended inservice sessions on the new primary program and on curricular changes in science. Kannapel attended inservice sessions on the primary program; Family Resource Centers and Youth Services Centers; school-based decisionmaking; and two facets of the new curriculum mandates, cooperative learning and technology. Coe also attended a public relations program, "Celebrating the Spirit" [of reform], sponsored by the state department of education in Orange County. The event gave her an overview of all KERA implementation in that district.

Data Analysis

Coe and Kannapel have compiled a summary of the year's work to date, for purposes of formative evaluation. A copy of the report has been shared with the Laboratory's Contracting Officer's Technical Representative.

They have also compiled draft analyses of the areas of KERA on which they are currently focusing.

Dissemination

The second issue of "Notes from the Field" was disseminated during the last week in September 1991. It focused on school-based decision-making in the five districts studied over the summer. AEL has received a number of requests for "Notes from the Field." Coe and Kannapel assembled a streamlined mailing list during the second week in November. The next issue will be disseminated in December and will focus on Family Resource Centers/Youth Services Centers.

Both Coe and Kannapel have responded to requests for presentations on the research project in Kentucky during the fourth quarter. Kannapel made a presentation to Kentucky LEAD (an organization of representatives of higher education) in Frankfort on October 8, 1991, and Coe addressed the Kentucky Forum for Chairpersons of School Councils in Bowling Green, KY, on October 25, 1991. Coe and Kannapel appeared before a subcommittee of the Education Committee of the Kentucky legislature on November 14, 1991. Several other requests for presentations were declined, for lack of time.

The two researchers prepared a paper that was presented as part of a panel discussion on ethnographic policy research at the annual convention of the American Anthropological Association. Their presentation was given on November 24, 1991.

Research on the Effects of Closing and Consolidating Rural and Small Schools

This project is responsive to Task 3: Conducting Applied Research and Development. The overall purpose of this project is to conduct research on the effects of closing and consolidating rural and small schools in the AEL Region. Designed to be completed in two major phases, FY 91 activities comprise the feasibility study.

Mary Hughes, the principal investigator for this project, left AEL on October 1, 1991, to accept another position. However, she completed a draft of the historical review of public school education for the state of West Virginia. This document also summarizes what she has learned about the feasibility of the research that was planned along with recommendations for continuation. The following excerpt from the report captures those recommendations:

> A study on consolidation will be complex, time consuming, expensive, and inconclusive. Studying one aspect of the issue would be unethical, as the researcher would not be presenting the whole story and may be leaving out facts that would alter the findings. The findings of a study would not be reflective of other areas, other states, or communities. The findings would be specific to the topic and community studied.
>
> After constructing the historical background of public elementary and secondary education and consolidation of schools and/or districts in West Virginia and upon consideration of that historical review, I have come to the conclusion that the issue of consolidation is very complex and site specific. Therefore, I would recommend that AEL not conduct a four-year study on the consolidation issue. If AEL feels compelled to do a study, then I recommend the study be a series of case studies where all aspects of the issue are researched. This type of study would involve qualitative and quantitative analysis. The conclusions drawn would be site specific.

The recommendations noted above and the disposition of the paper are being considered by RSS staff and AEL administrators. Much work has been done regarding consolidation. The RSS database has been expanded and a sound conceptual framework for a comprehensive study has been identified. However, such a study would be more than the quantitative analysis of existing data envisioned in the proposal. Ways to capitalize on the work accomplished in this project are under study.

TASK 4: COLLABORATE WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Participate in Thematic Collaboratives

- Todd Strohmenger convened those collaborating with AEL on Activity 1, Roles Rural Schools Can Play to Integrate the Provision of Social Services, in conjunction with the October meeting of the National Rural Education Association in Jackson, MS. After extensive discussion, the group decided that more reflection was needed about the mission and goals of this collaborative. Members agreed to put their ideas on paper and get them to Strohmenger. The next step would be for AEL to synthesize those ideas and get a communique back out to the collaborators for response...Activity 2: AEL will need to determine during the next quarter whether or not it can continue to serve as convening Lab for this activity, Multiregion Overview and Assessment of Rural School Finance Policy. Mary Hughes, who conceived this activity and was to represent AEL in the collaborative, resigned from the Laboratory during this quarter.

- Other collaborative work included...Activity 3: Carol Perroncel attended an early childhood education coordinators' meeting in Denver and finalized arrangements with the Far West Laboratory (FWL) to cosponsor workshops on FWL's new, research-based materials and processes for young children and their families in Virginia and West Virginia during December...Activity 7: Robert Childers substituted for Craig Howley at a National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) meeting on November 23 in Washington, DC... Activity 10: Merrill Meehan and Kimberly Hambrick attended an October meeting of Laboratory evaluation coordinators hosted by Research for Better Schools in Philadelphia.

Participate in OERI-Sponsored Meetings/Activities

- At OERI's request, John Sanders served as a Laboratory representative on the Dissemination Forum Planning Committee and, in that capacity, attended two committee meetings in Washington, DC, during this quarter. Due to illness in his family, Sanders was unable to attend the Forum event in late November. However, AEL was represented by Terry Eidell and Pamela Lutz.

Participate in CSAP Collaborative

- AEL submitted the following documents to the Communication Service Assistance Program (CSAP) during the past quarter: 1990 National Assessment of Educational Progress in Mathematics: Analysis and Interpretive Remarks and Making Connections II: Four Educational Perspectives (Occasional Paper 33).

- Three sets of "R & D Notes" were distributed to a total audience of 2,882.

TASK 5: CONDUCT EVALUATION

Formative and Summative Evaluation

At Level Three, in the AEL Board of Directors' fourth-quarter meeting, the Future Committee presented their report on three topics: interim corporate goals for October–April, a safety net level for this period, and specific processes for the evaluation of the executive director. The full Board voted to accept the Future Committee's report.

At Level Two, the AEL Needs Assessment and Planning Process was conducted in Tennessee this quarter. The meetings dealt with a review of Tennessee's educational reform efforts, topics or issues in Tennessee's reform efforts that could profit from increased R & D efforts, and suggestions of approaches for AEL to address the Tennessee reform issues.

At Level One, program directors are responsible for planning, conducting, and evaluating their work. During the fourth quarter, the AEL Project Planning and Management Process Folder was pilot tested, revised, and installed. Several AEL project plans have completed the outside review process, the Executive Director's Office review, and now are on file in the respective programs.

AEL Impact Studies

AEL evaluators will complete a minimum of one impact study each year. At AEL, impact is defined as changes in clients' attitudes, knowledge, practices, or policies. During the third quarter, the Management Team selected the impact of four agency linkage strategies (partnerships, collaboratives, consortia, and networks) as the topic for the FY 91 AEL impact study. During the fourth quarter, the Management Team discussed various sampling plans and data collection methods for the study. It was decided to use a purposeful sample of AEL clients known to be linked, through an organization, in one of the four strategies named and also to use a combination of mail and in-person data collection methods. Also, it was decided to use the AEL calendar of events as the basis for assembling the purposeful sample, effectively moving the FY 91 impact study into FY 92.

External Evaluation of AEL Work

AEL subcontracts with Daniel L. Stufflebeam and his staff at Western Michigan University (WMU) to complete an external evaluation of AEL's work. The FY 91 external evaluation subcontract specifies that WMU staff will complete one impact study, complete a survey of AEL clients regarding AEL products and services, complete a metaevaluation of AEL evaluation reports, and design and conduct an evaluation session for AEL program directors.

Work progressed on the first three external evaluation tasks this quarter. Regarding the WMU impact study, AEL staff collected and assembled, in letter form, the AEL staff's review comments of the draft intensive case study of Cabell County Schools (WV). WMU staff revised the draft case study report and mailed the final version to AEL, completing this task. Regarding the WMU survey of AEL clients, WMU staff William Wiersma and Zoe Barley revised the section one portions of the six different AEL client surveys and the common section two portion, typeset the masters of each, printed six master cover letters, and sent these items and 450 postage-paid WMU-addressed envelopes to AEL staff. AEL staff printed all the cover letters and client surveys, assembled the survey packets, and mailed the packets to 417 AEL clients on October 27, 1991. Regarding the metaevaluation of AEL evaluation reports, AEL program directors discussed the first due date in relation to many important events scheduled for the last month of the Fiscal Year. Accordingly, the date for the submission of evaluation reports for inclusion in the FY 91 metaevaluation was changed to January 2, 1992.

AEL Quality Assurance Process

The two major components of the AEL Quality Assurance program are the Project Planning and Evaluation Process and the AEL Product Quality Assurance Process.

The Project Planning and Evaluation Process includes peer review and executive review of the project plan and the final report. The AEL Project Plan Outline was approved and distributed in the second quarter. The formal definition of a "project" at AEL was approved and communicated to program directors in the third quarter. The Project Planning and Management Process Folder was tested, revised, and approved in the fourth quarter. Thus, the three components of the AEL Project Planning and Evaluation Process were designed, tested, approved, and installed in FY 91, as planned.

The AEL Product Quality Manual is the most important component of the AEL Product Quality Assurance Process. Until this quality control manual is developed, the "old" AEL quality control programs and forms remain in effect.

Cross-Laboratory Evaluation

AEL agreed to participate in OERI-led cross-Laboratory evaluation activities starting in FY 92. Part of the meeting of the Laboratory evaluation coordinators held in Philadelphia on October 17-18 was devoted to OERI-funded cross-Lab evaluation study. Charles Stalford, OERI, introduced Brenda Turnbull, Principal in the Policy Study Associates firm and director of the three-year, cross-Lab evaluation study. Turnbull discussed the basics of the evaluation study and highlighted its three major foci: needs assessment and planning, collaboration, and significant Laboratory activities and outcomes. Turnbull also discussed the main data collection methodologies of field-based case studies and tracer case studies.

TASK 6: IMPROVE LINKAGES BETWEEN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Participate in Annual National Policy Symposium

- Carol Perroncel assisted OERI/Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in planning/evaluating the annual symposium as requested.

- Perroncel, with representatives from AEL's Region, attended the National Policy Forum on Strengthening Linkages and the Transitions Between Early Childhood Education and Early Elementary School held on September 12-13, 1991, in Washington, DC. Perroncel briefed AEL representatives on the Forum agenda and what would be expected of them as Forum participants. She summarized participants' answers to three questions that are included in the Forum proceedings: (1) What are the three themes that emerged from the National Forum that affect our Region? (2) What steps can be taken to address these themes within the Region? (3) In what areas would you like more information and resources with respect to early childhood and early elementary school linkages?

Conduct Regional Early Childhood Education Meetings

- AEL's Working Conference on Preschool-to-School Linkages was held November 21-22 in Louisville, KY. At the request of OERI and ACF, this was a collaborative venture with Kentucky's Head Start Collaboration Project. There were approximately 210 participants representing the following groups: Chapter I and/or Even Start, Department of Education, Early Intervention, Follow Through, Governor's Office, Head Start, Health and Human Resources, parents, and state colleges and universities.

- In preparation for the regional conference, Perroncel assisted in organizing a Technical Assistance Collaboration Forum held on August 21, 1991, in Louisville, KY. Forum participants assisted at the regional conference as group facilitators and provided materials and resources for a display. The participants agreed to make technical assistance available to areas in AEL's Region interested in doing more with transitions and linkages during the year. This is particularly welcome, since AEL has not been awarded the resources to provide such assistance.

Assess and Report Upon Early Childhood Education Activities

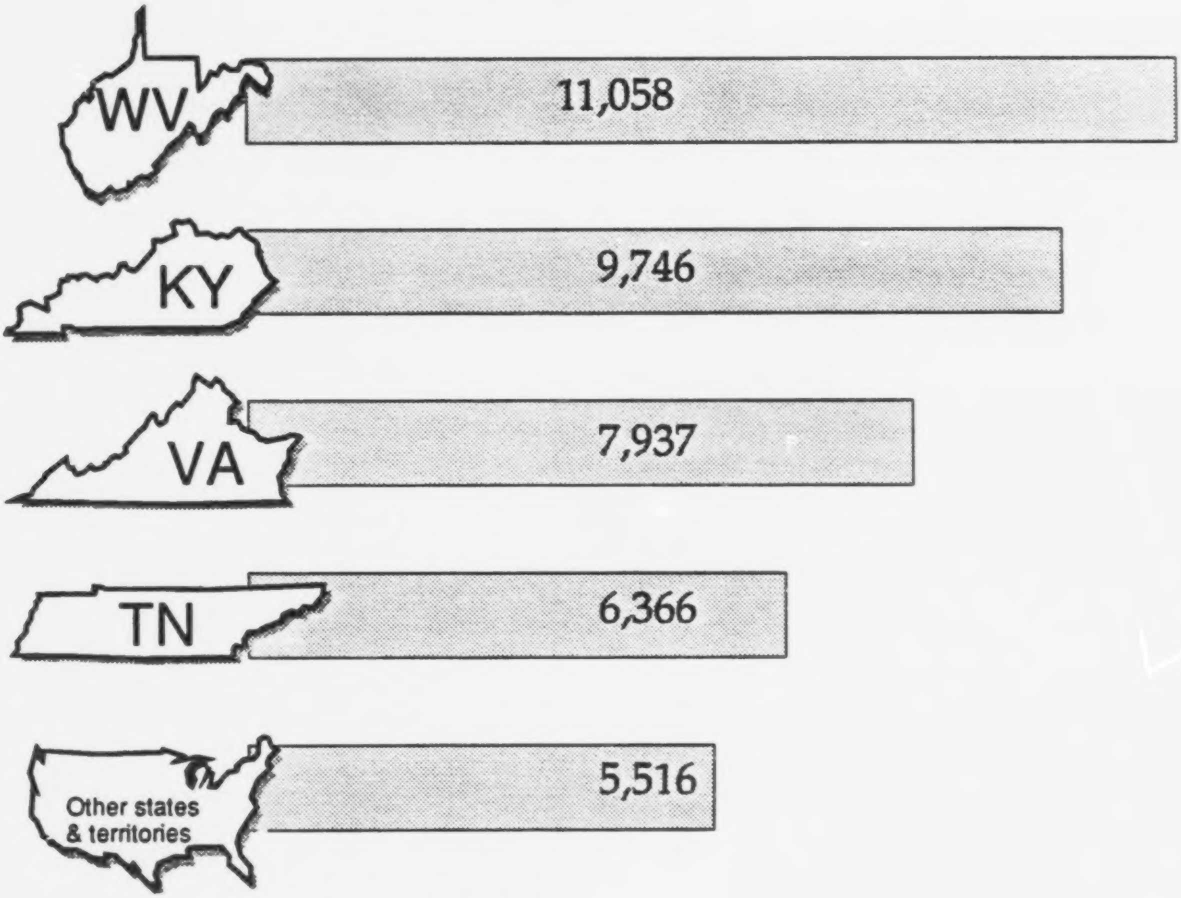
- Due to the fact that AEL's regional symposium was held in late November, the evaluation and assessment of Task 6 will not be available until after the first of the year.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

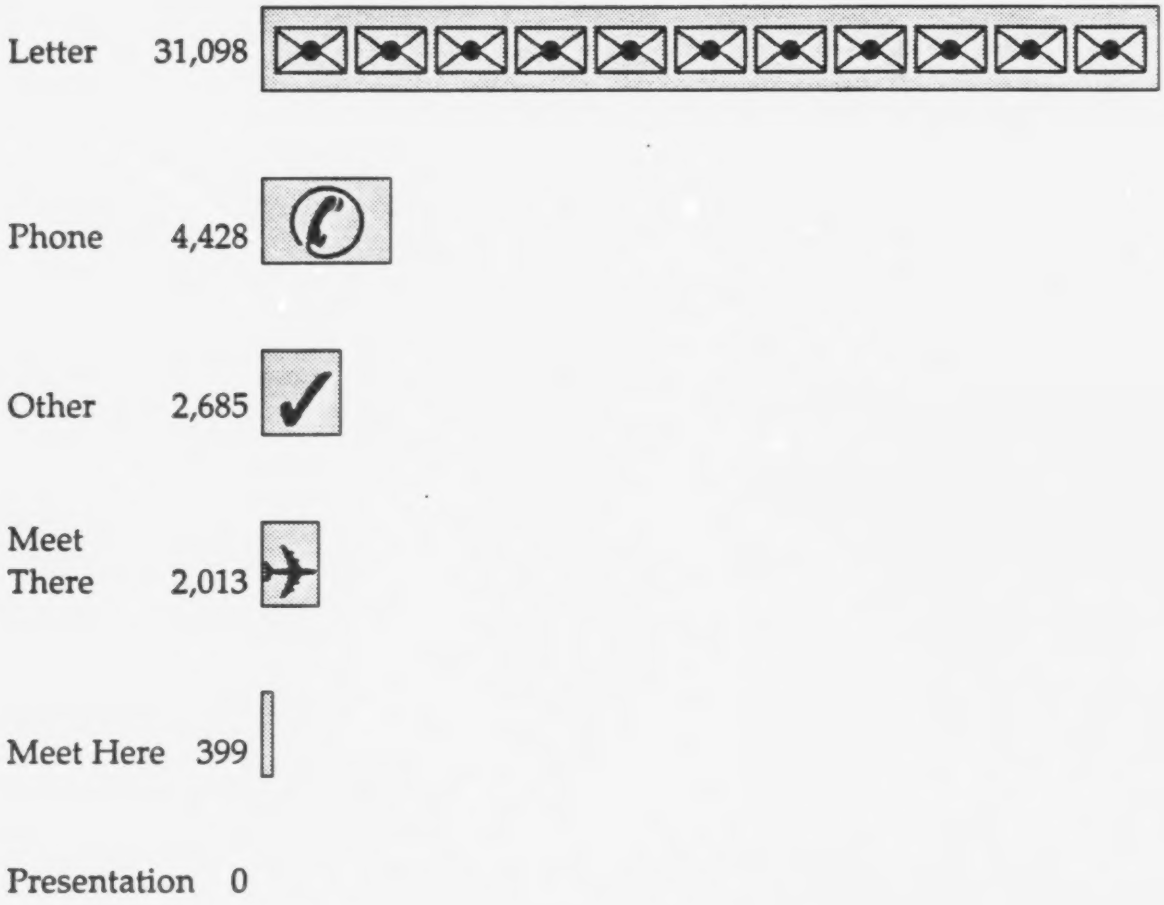
FY 91 AEL Contacts With Clients

SUMMARY OF AEL CONTACTS WITH CLIENTS FOR FY 91—BY STATE

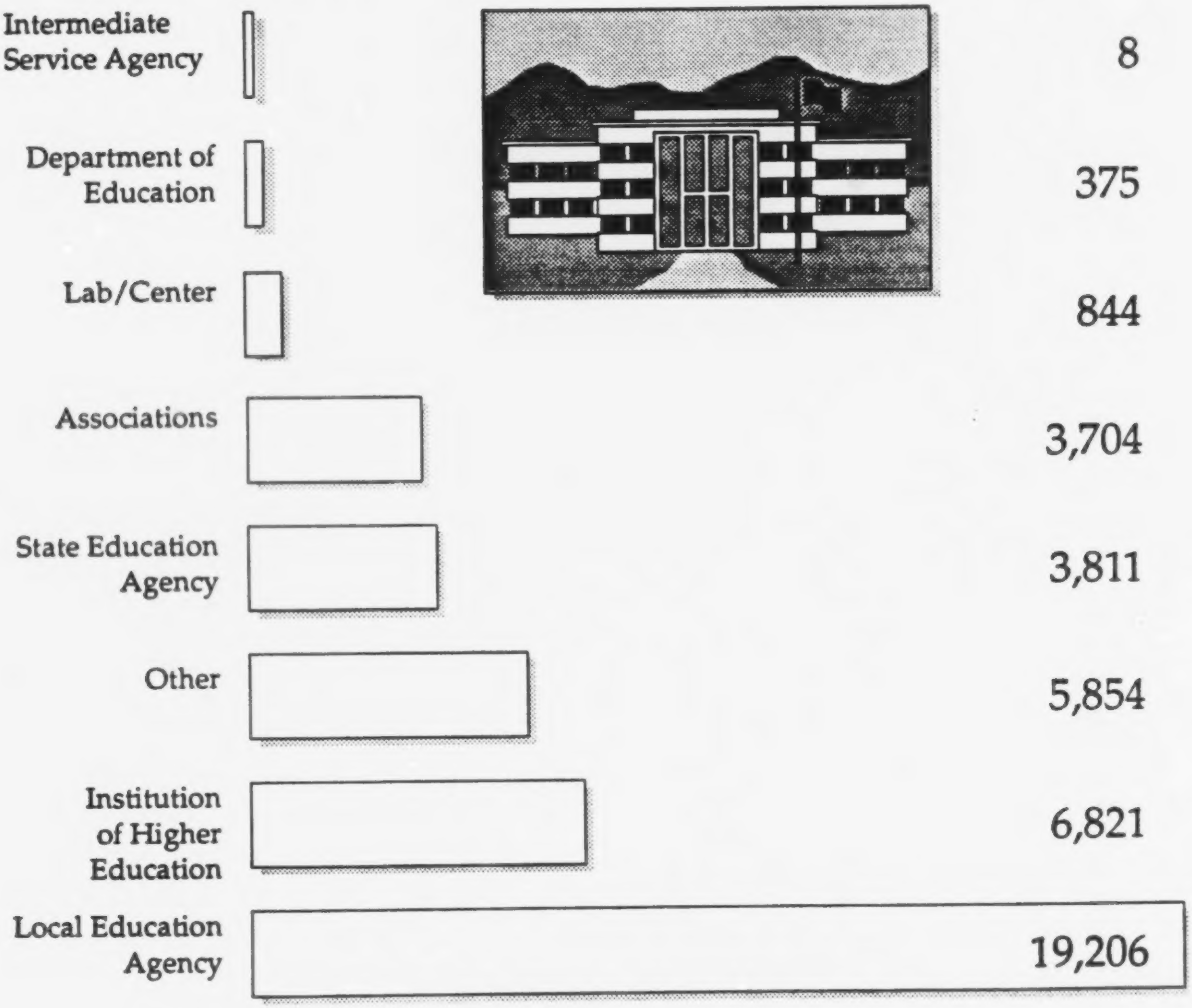


TOTAL CONTACTS FOR FY 91: OVER 40,600

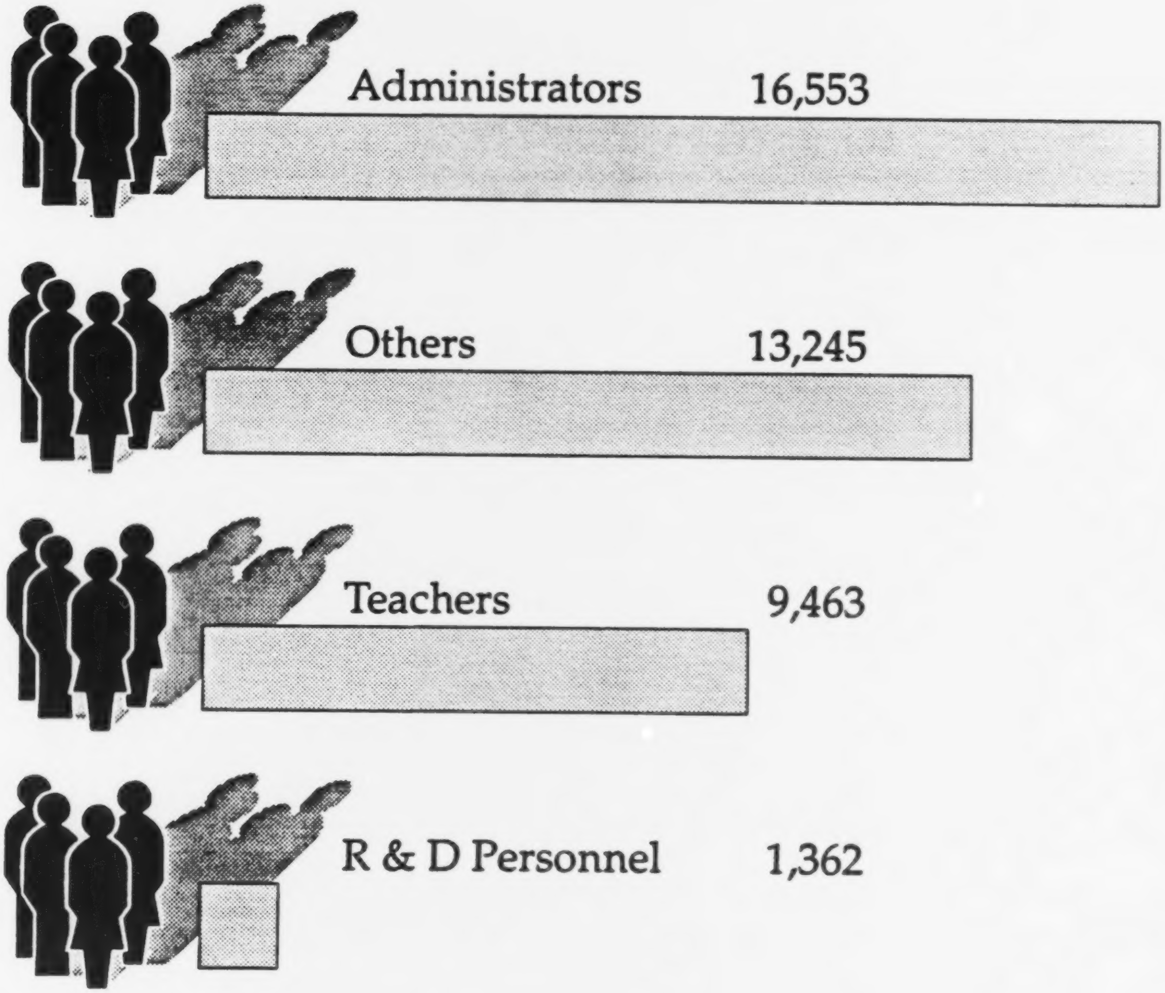
SUMMARY OF AEL CONTACT WITH CLIENTS FOR FY 91—BY TYPE



SUMMARY OF AEL CONTACTS WITH CLIENTS FOR FY 91—BY ORGANIZATION



SUMMARY OF AEL CONTACTS WITH CLIENTS FOR FY 91—BY POSITION



APPENDIX B:

Fourth Quarter Program Advisory Committee Meeting Summaries

Memorandum

AEL
INCORPORATED

TO: Classroom Instruction Program Advisory Committee Members

FROM: Jane Hange

SUBJECT: Actions and Decisions of 10/19 Meeting

DATE: November 13, 1991

Thanks very much for your active participation in the collaborative and "hospitality hour" sections of the first progressive CI PAC meeting. Both sessions were very productive. The actions and recommendations are summarized below. If your recollections differ from mine, please phone.

1. Action Item: Discussion of collaboration between Classroom Instruction and Colleges and Schools PACs and the NEA and AACTE affiliates they represent led to the identification of six action strategies. These are: 1) future study group between TEA and TACTE on alternative forms of assessment, 2) possible Minigrant project proposal to address the shortage of teachers in some disciplines (music, foreign languages, mathematics, science) especially in rural areas, 3) assessment of programs of teacher education that are preparing preservice teachers in the use of alternative assessment measures (survey to be included as box in The Link, 4) future collaborative project on increasing cooperation between schools and colleges on placement of preservice teachers in field experiences, 5) possible technical assistance project on methods of following up and mentoring teacher education program graduates, and 6) identification through The Link announcement of an AEL database on college-school partnerships (see Resource Center insert in fourth quarter issue). Staff will discuss these ideas with association leaders and others and will follow up with PAC members. Both CI and C & S PAC members described the joint session as useful and recommended that it be repeated semiannually at AEL Board meetings.

2. Information Item: Brief overviews of education news from the associations, departments, legislatures, and/or districts of each state. Thank you for sharing both current news and your field efforts on behalf of CI and AEL. PAC members reported the following:

Kentucky--Sandy Lillard Adams, KEA representative to the CI PAC and AEL Board, reported that she conducted a September 14 AEL awareness session at the KEA Board meeting for approximately 38 board members and association leaders. She distributed sign-up sheets for The Link and collected 12 which CI staff provided to editor Carolyn Luzader. Sandy described a database of more than 200 contacts from whom she may request articles for the next Kentucky edition of the CI insert to The Link. She also reported distributing to each school in her district the CEDar response to the NAEP math scores. There have been two more Oldham County Schools replications of the parent involvement workshop, conducted originally as an AEL training-for-trainers in June 1991 by CI staff Becky Burns and consultant Helen Saunders. Finally, Sandy discussed the 95 letters she mailed to the Writing Advisory Committee (for alternate assessment measures) to introduce AEL, The Link, and the Resource Center. She provided all PAC members and staff with the August and September issues of KEA News.

Tennessee--Doris Haywood, TEA representative to the CI PAC and AEL Board, provided to all PAC members and staff the accountability assumptions developed by NEA and TEA along with a description of TEA services; "Site-Based Decisionmaking: The Basics" from TEA; TEA "Kids Can't Wait" stickers; August, September, and October issues of Tennessee Teacher; and September and October issues of TEA News. She reported sharing "Focus on Instruction" and "R & D Notes" issues with her fellow doctoral candidates at East Tennessee State University. Doris described routinely sharing AEL materials with Hawkins County principals.

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Virginia--Ralph Booher, VEA representative to the CI PAC and AEL Board president, described recent VEA events including regional pre-legislative session workshops and "Resolving Conflict through Peace Education" the November Instructional Conference (cancelled). He also reported on the provision of information packets on AEL/CI programs and services to: the VEA Board of Directors, University of Virginia Taft Institute participants, the Pulaski County Education Association (former AEL Board member Beth Nelson presented an AEL awareness session), the Pulaski High School English department (also presented by Beth Nelson), the Longwood College chapter of Phi Delta Kappa (AEL awareness session conducted by UniServ director Jim Caruth), and a display table of AEL materials at the VEW District 2 Instructional Day. Ralph reported providing the CEDaR response materials to the NAEP math scores to his division's math supervisor. Finally, Ralph represented the AEL board at the recent CEDaR and OERI meetings.

West Virginia--Jackie Romeo, WVEA representative to the CI PAC and AEL Board, discussed providing all K-1 computer training facilitators with "Guidelines for Developing Articles for 'Focus on Instruction'" at their summer institute. During the quarter, Jackie obtained descriptions of innovative programs from nine West Virginia teachers for inclusion in the fourth quarter issue of the program's insert to The Link. She also reported that her district involved AEL-trained presenters for their districtwide staff development sessions. She provided PAC members and staff with the August and September issues of the West Virginia School Journal, "The Rad Reporter" developed by students, and "Romeo's Rumors" developed by Jackie to keep parents informed.

3. Action Item: Discussion/consideration for approval of project plans for VEA-AEL study group on alternative assessment and WVEA-AEL study group on documenting/evaluating programs for at-risk students. After reviewing project plans for both initiatives, PAC members approved the plans. New typed copy of WVEA-AEL project plan is enclosed.

4. Information Item: Update on CI program activities and calendar of upcoming events. CI staff briefly reviewed training, study group, communication, and technical assistance activities for late third quarter and fourth quarter FY 91 and discussed upcoming WV training and study group meetings, a VA training planning meeting, and program evaluation efforts.

5. Action Item: Update on fourth quarter Link insert and responses to date from FY 91 Readership Survey. Jackie Romeo provided articles she had solicited or developed for the insert featuring West Virginia due to be published in November. CI staff reported that 46 responses were received to the "Focus on Instruction" Readership Survey included in the third quarter issue. (Jack Barnette, evaluation consultant to the CI and SGA programs, is summarizing this data for the annual report). The first quarter insert issue will feature Tennessee.

6s. Other Business: PAC members requested and contributed to send a live plant arrangement to Connie Clark in sympathy for the death of her husband. CI staff handled these arrangements on October 22. They also requested a copy of Carol Mitchell's response to the OERI request to all Lab institutional liaisons for descriptions of teacher involvement in Lab activities (enclosed). Finally, Ralph Booher suggested that PAC members request association recognition of their state affiliate colleagues who have attended AEL training, contributed articles to The Link, or participated as study group members.

Thanks very much for your contributions at the meeting and in your state. My apologies for the delay on this followup memo. Please keep in touch. I look forward to seeing you in January and hope neither the smoke nor the snow will detour you from your route to Charleston! Have a blessful Thanksgiving.

Minutes of SGA Program Advisory Committee Meeting
Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, Nashville, Tennessee
October 19, 1991

The SGA PAC met from 1:30-3:15 p.m. on October 19 to discuss program business. Those in attendance were Jim Graham, chair; Randy Kimbrough; Beth Sattes; and Sandra Orletsky.

I. QUILT Awareness Session. A special QUILT awareness session for invited Tennessee educators was held from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 19. Eight QUILT trainers presented the informative session for an interested audience representing five districts, AEL staff, and AEL Board members. The session was videotaped and is available to share with those PAC or Board members not in attendance and those representatives from Tennessee districts and teacher centers who are interested but were unable to attend due to prior commitments.

II. Update on QUILT Evaluation and Recruitment for FY 92-93. Jack Barnette's report was reviewed in some detail. This will be the last report on QUILT evaluation for this fiscal year. Sandy and Beth discussed a QUILT recruitment strategy for each state. In Tennessee, we have conferred with TASSA Board nominations and then sent letters of invitations, followed up by phone calls. Five districts attended the October 19 session, and several other districts and teacher centers expressed strong interest but were not able to attend. The next issue of the "SGA Exchange" will feature QUILT in three districts and can be used as a marketing strategy. Contact with TASCD's president elect, Kay Awalt, was made to get QUILT on the agenda of upcoming conferences in Tennessee. TASSA's future conferences are another possibility for disseminating information about QUILT, as are the meetings of the various administrators' associations.

In Virginia, the recruitment strategy is to meet with Ernie Martin and the 11 regional service representatives on November 12 and do a similar QUILT presentation as was done in Tennessee. We will use representatives from Augusta and Campbell Counties, along with AEL staff to present. Another possible meeting with the Virginia LEAD director and representatives of VAESP, VASSP, and Virginia Middle Schools, along with the Henrico County superintendent, will be investigated. The last issue of the "SGA Exchange" featured the QUILT program in Virginia.

The QUILT recruitment strategy in Kentucky will include a presentation to the KASA Board of Directors at the November 20 meeting, using trainers from the Kentucky sites. In addition, a spring update on QUILT in Kentucky as the "SGA Exchange" focus is a possibility. Randy Kimbrough will personally call several superintendents, Dan Branham, and Steve Henderson to see if they are interested in finding out more on the QUILT Staff Development Program. No specific plans for additional meetings were set.

In West Virginia, the QUILT recruitment strategy will include two meetings scheduled for October 30 and November 18 with Tom Currie and Karen Larry from the West Virginia Department of Education and Gail Looney from the West Virginia Professional Development Center, as well as Vivian Kidd from the West Virginia Education Fund. We will plan a meeting with Bill Baker to identify other recruitment steps. Some possibilities include the "SGA Exchange" and a QUILT presentation at the January Board meeting or other administrator association meetings.

III. QUILT Plans for 1992-93. Plans to date were reviewed as outlined on the several handouts relating to district requirements and costs for next year. We discussed the fact that current C schools could receive the full QUILT program in FY 92-93 and that the current 13 districts could expand to new schools. The possibility of working with current school districts to continue conducting research on some aspects of QUILT was discussed. The use of study groups to conduct some additional research in districts was discussed.

IV. Personnel and Network of Schools. Assessment, ungraded primary, and year-round schools are the three topics for the pilot test effort on disseminating R & D-based information to school administrators via audiocassette. Those topics are based on responses from the survey to the Network members. SGA PAC members along with the LEAD directors will be included in the Network of Schools dissemination effort. The series will be called "Conversations on (topic)." Helen Saunders is working on this SGA activity in addition to her training responsibilities.

V. Evaluation of FY 91 Plans. Staff reviewed the current evaluation plans on the readership surveys of SGA's dissemination efforts relative to the "SGA Exchange" and "R & D Notes."

VI. "SGA Exchange". Bobby Snider will solicit articles from three QUILT districts in Tennessee for the next issue. The West Virginia insert will be due in early January.

VII. Training-for-Trainers Events. Jim Graham suggested that the Lab focus on developing awareness and/or a series of training sessions on hot topics such as assessment and ungraded primary. He suggested that AEL identify possible future hot topics and develop slick awareness sessions that will enable us to keep AEL in the forefront and on the cutting edge. SGA staff will share this suggestion.

VIII. State Reports. State reports were given by representatives of Kentucky and Virginia.

IX. Other. Enclosed is the review of Kozol's new book, Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools.

Memorandum

AEL INCORPORATED

TO: Colleges and Schools Program Advisory Committee Members

FROM: Jane Hange Jane

SUBJECT: Actions of October 19 Meeting

DATE: October 30, 1991

Thanks very much for your active, actually avid, participation in the C & S PAC meeting and Minigrant Reviewer Training. Your connections in the field and dedication to program goals are essential for any success we achieve. Thanks also to Ed for the letter of appreciation to each Minigrant Reviewer.

The following summarizes the decisions and actions of the PAC meeting.

I. Action Item: Discussion with the CI PAC about collaboration possibilities led to the identification of six action strategies: 1) future study group between TEA and TACTE on alternative forms of assessment, 2) possible Minigrant project proposal to address the shortage of teachers in some disciplines (music, foreign languages, mathematics, science) especially in rural areas, 3) assessment of programs of teacher education that are preparing preservice teachers in the use of alternative assessment measures (survey to be distributed at Annual Conference and box in The Link), 4) future collaborative project on increasing cooperation between schools and colleges on placement of preservice teachers in field experiences, 5) possible technical assistance project on methods of following up and mentoring teacher education program graduates, and 6) identification through The Link announcement of an AEL database on college-school partnerships (see Resource Center insert in fourth quarter issue). Staff will discuss these ideas with association leaders and others and will followup with PAC members. Both CI and C & S PAC members described the joint session as useful and recommended that it be repeated semiannually at AEL Board meetings.

2. Action Item: PAC members reviewed guidelines for final Minigrant planning and project reports and made the following suggestion: 1) Add an estimate of pages preferred for both grant types; 2) Indicate how the report should be typed or if a disk may be sent; 3) Make more explicit the requirement for activities description in project reports; 4) Rework the outcomes of the planning process request; and 5) Add a sample cover sheet to include the title, identification of partners, dates of the project or planning effort, author of the report, and level of funding of the grant. These suggestion are being incorporated into the final guidelines to be typeset and mailed in November to projects due for completion since the spring Minigrant competition. You will be copied. Thanks for your help.

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3. Information Item: Review of Minigrant Reviewer Training Agenda. No additions noted. Thank you for feedback on the training. We are currently modifying the manual and will send the revised copy to you and to Jane Williams, Tennessee Reviewer who could not attend. After our discussions on November 15 of the remaining Minigrant applications selected as priorities, I will notify all applicants of the PAC's decisions. Minigrant Reviewers will also receive a letter informing them of the successful applicants and again thanking them for their assistance.

4. Action Item: PAC members indicated they would prefer not having presenter or facilitator roles in the C & S Annual Working Conference. Thanks to Ed for agreeing to offer a welcome to the event, and to all for your active involvement in identification of participants and in helping the state affiliates plan on Sunday, November 3.

5. Information Item: C & S staff briefly reviewed progress on the Minigrant Reviewer Training and Annual Working Conference and described presentations by staff at VACTE and WVACTE conferences and by Dot Jenkins at the TACTE conference. Thanks, Dot.

6. Other Business: No additional items were discussed at this meeting. Staff are currently incorporating your suggestions into the one-page description of the Minigrant Program and Cover Sheet. The typeset document should be available in November. This will be announced in "Dialogue" as will the quest for alternative assessment university courses and the successful applicants in the fall 1991 Minigrant competition.

The success of our recent Minigrant competition has much to do with your field communications and those of our institutional contacts. Please pass along AEL thanks as you see these folks.

MEETING FOLLOWUP
Agenda
State Policy Program Advisory Committee Meeting
Nashville, Tennessee
October 19, 1991

1. Update on AEL/CPRE/Danforth Policy Seminar

We've had a good response to the letters of invitation for the November 10-12 seminar on systemic reform. Staff will bring committee members up to date on plans for the event.

Discussion Result. Staff briefly reviewed information about expected participants at the seminar. Committee members asked staff to be sure to clarify with CPRE the role of Chief State School Officers in the closing session.

2. Discussion of Education Issues in the States

The program is on schedule for meeting the requirements of the OERI contract for FY 91. However, we still need to produce one issue packet before the end of the fiscal year on November 30. A brief discussion of current issues in the states should help us identify a timely topic for the packet.

Discussion Result. Committee members discussed several policy-relevant concerns in their states. Accountability issues were a large part of the discussion at the Tennessee planning meeting the afternoon before. A lot of interest was evident in West Virginia's assistance effort in Mingo County. These two topics will be investigated by staff as the focus of policy issue packets.

3. Discussion of Activity-Level Evaluation Data

The Regional Laboratory proposal for 1991-95 specifies that program advisory committees undertake an annual review of program evaluation data. Staff propose that this review be undertaken during the first-quarter meeting of FY 92. Data from the regional policy seminar should be available by then.

Discussion Result. Staff reviewed with committee members the requirement that advisory committees undertake an annual evaluation review of program activities. A postponement to the January meeting was agreed upon.

Community Liaison To Urban Education
Advisory Committee Meeting
October 19, 1991

AGENDA

1. Outcomes of completed activities:

   (a) Multicultural workshop, Portsmouth, VA

   Portsmouth Public Schools requested technical assistance from the CLUE staff in training central office administrators, special programs directors, and principals in creating an environment through leadership techniques that enhance the presence and acceptance of cultural and ethnic diversity in the educational environment.

   (b) Regional parent training conference, Dyersburg, TN

   The West Tennessee African American Affairs Council collaborated with CLUE staff in identifying, organizing and arranging for 60 parents from 20 counties in West Tennessee to meet, identify special educational needs, and plan future improvement activities. Results of the needs assessment and further training will occur tenatively in February 1992.

2. Evaluation of the Orchard Manor demonstration site (Charleston, WV):

   (a) Impact of Resident Council activities and related outcomes. Members of the Resident Council have been in negotiation with the Housing Authority to place a traffic gate at the entrance of the complex to monitor and eliminate the drug traffiking. Additionally, they proposed and received a $40,000 grant to maintain office space and to provide training for resident members. Several very positive newspaper stories (full page) have publicized the positive activities being conducted by the council.

   (b) Outcomes of Kanawha County consolidation processes. Subcommittee members and resident council members worked with the board of education to ensure proper input from the Orchard Manor community about the closing of the demonstration site school. The school has been left open for at least two years with the stipulation that academic improvement will show significant gains.

   The sudden resignation of the superintendent of schools might have some impact on the continuation of efforts to establish and stabilize the demonstration project in the housing complex.

(c) Exploration of a new (or additional) site in Lexington, KY. The demonstration site project, as designed, is predicated upon building a collaborative partnership with school personnel. While the community activities have been extremely successful, far less progress has been made at the school. The possibility of the school being closed in the consolidation plans also presented a problem. The decision is to stay with the community, evaluate the process, and then consider moving on to Lexington, KY, for the new or additional site.

3. Collaborative activities

(a)"What Works In Educational Reform: An African-American Perspective Conference," Louisville, KY sponsored by the National Black State Legislative Caucus. Staff was invited by Senator Gerald Neal of the Kentucky Legislature to assist the Kentucky Educational Reform African American and At-Risk Children Caucus in identifying and sponsoring grassroots parents to this national conference. Twenty-five conferees from West Virginia and Kentucky were sponsored.

(b)"Grant Writing Workshop For Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention Funds From Federal, State And Private Sources" (see attachment for list of cosponsors). Staff cosponsored the workshop, provided stipends for community members, and presented four minisessions on needs sensing and writing goals and objectives.

4. Product dissemination

(a) Newsworthy Issues on Education/Equal Rights
150 copies each to WV State Conference Branches, NAACP KY State Conference Branches, NAACP, and the TN State Conference Branches, NAACP

(b) Resident Council Newsletter (Orchard Manor)
300 copies each of the August and September issues

(c) "Honoring Our Past" Proceedings of the First Two Conferences on West Virginia's Black History--100 copies have been reproduced and provided to Marshall University. The remaining two hundred copies are to be distributed to schools, libraries, and archival units.

(d) One hundred and fifty (150) copies of a workshop packet entitled "Multicultural Education: Keeping Individual Differences Secure"

5. Other business

REPORT OF RSS PAC, OCTOBER 19, 1991

The Rural, Small Schools Program Advisory Committee met from 4:00 to 5:00 PM, Saturday, October 19. The following members were present: Ralph Booher, Keith Smith, Sandy Lillard, and Jim Graham.

The following narrative details the discussion of agenda items.

Establishing Library Networks

Todd Strohmenger described the library network that is being established in West Virginia. Three high schools in Mercer County will be using ERIC on CD-ROM. Microfiche will be provided by Bluefield State College as well as copies of journal articles requested by students and teachers. Three copies of ERIC on CD-ROM subscriptions are being provided the schools in order that they might begin operations in the near future. RSS staff will provide an ERIC awareness workshop for one of the faculties with other workshops being conducted by Mercer County Schools staff.

The schools will not be on line with the college library at the beginning of the network. Confusion exists regarding the cost of schools accessing state and college libraries. The charges quoted by the Bluefield State librarian was $200,000 initial charge plus $1100 per month. The possibility of putting college libraries on CD-ROM was discussed and RSS staff will investigate this posibility.

Utilization Project

An ERIC awareness workshop will be conducted in November for staff development committees from all schools in the Danville (VA) Schools. Participants will conduct faculty workshops in their schools as a part of the staff development program. Later studies will be conducted using ERIC as an information resource.

An ERIC awareness workshop will be conducted in November for faculty at Amelia High School. A needs assessment was conducted with the faculty during the last school year to identify needs that would be studied using the ERIC database. The November workshop will prepare faculty for those studies.

Consolidation Study

Mary Hughes resignation and future of the consolidation study was discussed. Mary had conducted a study of the history of consolidation in West Virginia to detail the context with which to view consolidation in West Virginia. The conclusion and recommendations of the report were given PAC members and most members agreed that another four years of study would not yield a valuable contribution to the literature. Decisions regarding consolidation and school closings must be made within the local context. Also, state department of education data seldom included individual school data. Thus, any study would have to obtain finance data from local districts--a very expensive task. The number of variable that would be encountered in a quality study, would require more resources than is available for the RSS program.

PAC members recommended that the draft document be examined and considered for publication as an illustration of the history of consolidation in one state. They did not want to see the effort go to waste.

Special Projects

RSS staff conducted a needs assessment with representative faculty of each school in Giles County (VA). This is a part of a broader project involving a business/industry/school partnership in the county. An assessment of educational needs as perceived by business and industry was conducted earlier by the partnership. RSS plans to compare the results of the two studies.

Richard Layman, a regional office represtative of the Virginia State Department of Education, met with RSS staff and the superintendent of Mechlinburg County (VA). Dr. Layman will replicate the AEL school/community improvement process that was developed and tested in the previous lab contract. RSS staff will conduct the needs assessment and Dr. Layman will conduct all meetings of the steering committee and other groups.

The Woodlands Mountain Institute (WV) and RBS flew Strohmenger to Philadelphia to consult with the New Jersey Rural Advisory Committee regarding the needs assessment process and the integrated services collaborative in which AEL serves as lead lab.

PAC members suggested that a survey of rural educators be conducted to determine what they feel are their greatest needs. Strohmenger agreed to investigate the possibility.

Discussion of NREA Meeting

A meeting of organizations interested in the integrated services collaborative was held during the conference and 20 individuals attended. Organizations interested in being a part of the collaborative are to send a page suggesting the purpose and goal of such a collaborative.

A meeting of rural coordinators from the laboratories was held and each lab described the rural programs they have underway. Paul Nachtigal and Steve Nelson are working on a plan for regular meetings of rural coordinators and will recommend action to CEDAR in the near future.

MEETING RESULTS
Information Services Board Advisory Committee Meeting
Nashville, TN, Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, Davidson Room
Saturday, October 19, 1991; 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Information Services Board Advisory Committee Chair Robert Cleminson led committee member Edgar Sagan and staff members Merrill Meehan and Kimberly Hambrick through a consideration of the following items.

1. Advising Information Services After December 1, 1991 (decision)

   The AEL reorganization plan will be implemented soon. Since so much of Information Services program work affects the whole Lab (e.g., evaluation and needs assessment planning process), it seems like we could recommend that the Executive Committee serve as the advisory committee for Information Services in the future. However, to ensure the Executive Committee has the time to provide this advice, members should not be assigned to serve on the other "nondesignated member" advisory committees--Community Liaison for Urban Education; Rural Excel; and Rural, Small Schools.

   Results of Consideration

   Chair Rob Cleminson led the group in a discussion of this item. Following the discussion, Cleminson concluded that it makes the "most sense to him now--best way to go." Ed Sagan agreed that it makes sense. Cleminson said that the Information Services committee recommends that the Executive Committee serve as the advisory committee to the Information Services program in the future and that the AEL Executive Committee members not be assigned to serve on the other "nondesignated member" advisory committees.

2. Resource Center Update (information)

   Resource Center coordinator, Marilyn Slack, is preparing an open house for staff to demonstrate the improved information services now available. See the attached memo to staff. Marilyn will conduct a similar open house for Board members during their January meeting in Charleston.

   Results of Consideration

   Committee members read the Slack memo to staff on updated/new services in the Resource Center. Cleminson commented that is a "very impressive" list of information resources. He asked that the Resource Center "commend the staff volunteers who adopted a file." In response to a question regarding the status of the CSAP database, Kimberly Hambrick said it is "close, will be soon" in operation.

3. Special Issue of The Link (information)

The last quarter's issue of The Link (Vol. 10, No. 4) is a special issue that will focus on math and science, while tying in the topics of the national goals and assessment. The issue is in final draft, which is now being reviewed by Olivia Teel, mathematics coordinator, and Robert Seymour, science coordinator, Kanawha County (WV) Schools.

Results of Consideration

Ed Sagan noted that eight state universities in Kentucky received a National Science Foundation grant to form a consortium to prepare mathematics teachers for the elementary level. He requested that these folks receive a copy of the special issue of The Link on mathematics and science. Information Services staff said they would if Ed would send us a list of their names and addresses.

4. Miscellaneous Items (information)

Merrill Meehan will update committee members on three other items: (a) plans for the end-of-year issue of News-Scan, (b) Western Michigan University third-party evaluation work for AEL and policy study's incorporated evaluation study of all Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) for OERI, and (c) highlights of nonREL contract work (Project Charlie).

Results of Consideration

In the discussion regarding the plans for the end-of-year issue of the News-Scan Bulletin, Cleminson stated that he liked the "Commentary" section of the last issue and that he copied and disseminated it to the education faculty at Shepherd College. Committee members agreed to respond to an evaluation survey from Western Michigan University as part of their external evaluation contract. Also, on external evaluation, members discussed briefly the three tasks in the Policy Study Associates contract to evaluate all ten Labs in the nation. Finally, committee members commented on the variety of evaluation projects completed and underway that are outside of the REL contract, as presented by Kimberly Hambrick.

RURAL EXCEL PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Rural Excel Program Advisory Committee meeting was held Saturday, October 19, 1991, at the Holiday Inn-Crowne Plaza in Nashville, TN. Members present were: Doris Haywood, Chairperson, Dorothy Jenkins, Randy Kimbrough, Jacklin Romeo, and Robert Childers. Members unable to attend were: William Baker, Thomas Boysen, Phyllis Carter, Ed Reidy, and Bobby Snider. Guests attending all or part of the meeting were: Marjorie Pike, Tennessee Board Member; and Jane Hange, Pam Lutz, Sandra Orletsky, and Beth Sattes, AEL staff members.

Mathematics Activity Demonstration

The first hour of the meeting was devoted to a mathematics activity demonstration. Childers introduced Debbie Rushing who teaches seventh and eighth grade math at Lake Road Elementary School in the Obion County School System. Rushing is one of the 21 school teachers in Tennessee who are participating in the mathematics activity project. While the project focuses on grades five through eight, there is a Mathematics Activity Manual for each grade level kindergarten through eight plus algebra, geometry, and advanced mathematics.

Rushing began her presentation by reviewing the key concepts contained in Professional Standards for Teaching Mathematics. She reviewed briefly the history of the development of the Manuals at the Center of Excellence for Science and Mathematics Education (CESME) at the University of Tennessee at Martin, and described the week-long training program that all participants attended at the University of Tennessee-Martin in July. After demonstrating a number of activities, she engaged the group in an activity called Map Trivia.

After a brief question and answer session, Childers expressed to Rushing, on behalf of the group, appreciation for her demonstration.

Mathematics Activity Project

The following materials were distributed to committee members and reviewed briefly:

(1) a list of the mathematics activity project sites;

(2) instructions and copies of the "Mathematics Attitude Scale," "Mathematics Opinionnaire," "Mathematics Activity Class Log," "Class Roster"; and

(3) draft copy of the Mathematics Activities Project Plan.

Childers asked that members read carefully the mathematics project plan and provide any suggestions for improvement.

Program Review and Update

Estel Mills, the Tennessee Department of Education representative on the Rural Excel Coordinating Committee, has retired. Childers reported that he had met with Tom Cannon, who replaced Estel Mills as the assistant commissioner, Division of Curriculum and Instruction. Cannon agreed to serve on the Coordinating Committee with the understanding that, at the present time, his out-of-state travel would be limited.

Childers provided an update on program staff. At the present time:

> Oralee Kieffer, secretary, is working fulltime for Rural Excel; Beth Sattes (20%), Craig Howley (40%), and Pat Penn (temporary) make up the professional staff. Consultants under agreement are: Bob Stephens, Hobart Harmon, and Michele Plutro. Bob Carlson, professor at the University of Vermont, has agreed to spend some of his sabbatical leave next semester working in Rural Excel in Charleston, WV.

Early Childhood Education Project

The second project of the Rural Excel program is an Early Childhood Education project and is an outgrowth of an early childhood education meeting held last summer with representatives from the four state departments of education. The project, to be called "Family Connections," has the following objectives:

(1) to increase the number of communications between teachers and families of young children,

(2) to increase the amount of time families spend with their young children on developmentally appropriate learning activities, and

(3) to increase parental understanding of "developmentally appropriate" curriculum and activities in programs for young children.

The project plan will call for three major tasks:

(1) develop and test instructional materials and processes for training early childhood teachers,

(2) develop and test a series of family guides, and

(3) develop and test a set of instructional videotapes for families.

This project will be pilot tested in Eastern Kentucky during the second semester (1991-92 school year), and then field tested during the 1992-93 school year.

As part of Task 1, a one-day workshop will be conducted November 15 at the Holiday Inn in Morehead, KY. It is anticipated the pilot test site will be selected from the participating school systems.

APPENDIX C:

Certification of Rural Expenditures

RURAL EXPENDITURE CERTIFICATION

I certify that at least 25% of total expenditures by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., under Tasks 1-5 of Contract #RP91002002 for this contract year have been made to improve small rural schools, pursuant to appropriations earmarked to the laboratories for this purpose.

Terry L. Eidell

Terry L. Eidell, Executive Director

12/31/91

Date

ATTACHMENT TO AEL ANNUAL REPORT

Interim Report of the FY 91 External Evaluation of AEL
by Western Michigan University

APPALACHIA EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY (AEL) CASE STUDY REPORT: CABELL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT (WEST VIRGINIA)

by

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Written for
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Charleston, West Virginia

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INTRODUCTION

Education has often been characterized as "context specific." Context is certainly relevant when conducting a case study. The focus of this case study is the impact of the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) upon public school education in Cabell County, West Virginia, a county dominated by the city of Huntington.

However, it is also important to understand the various layered contexts that impinge upon Cabell County Public School District: for example, community perceptions, local politics, the regional economy, state history, and West Virginia court decisions. By all odds, AEL is a small but influential part of public school education in Cabell County. While primarily seeking to clarify AEL's part, we also see this case study as an opportunity to describe and to assess the situation of Cabell County School District in 1991.

An illustration of this: during the district's May 14, 1991, monthly principals' meeting, the Superintendent asked one of us to compare Cabell County to other school districts. We replied, "It seems that everyone here is doing a valiant job under very difficult conditions." Many of the 60 or so building principals and central administrators responded with applause and nods. We had struck a responsive chord by implicitly referring to a complex set of difficult conditions that are clearly beyond the control of local people.

Cabell County schools are today undergoing a painful restructuring process caused in part by the state's chronic budgetary difficulties and longstanding population decline. A continually smaller population base has meant fewer students, in turn necessitating school personnel being "riffed" with no guarantees of new jobs. The district's class sizes are now growing as is the diversity of student needs and problems within individual classrooms; many teachers dread these changes. Some Cabell County schools are closing permanently; others will be reconfigured to serve new grade levels; still other more centralized schools will soon be constructed. Parents from the county's smaller, rural communities face the prospect of their often young children being transported long distances to these new or reorganized schools. These same parents often confront tighter household budgets or even job losses.

The state is simultaneously still attempting to implement the ambitious Recht Decision of May 11, 1982, in which West Virginia's public education system was declared unconstitutional because it failed to provide all students in all counties with a "thorough and efficient" education. Today, the state continues to issue detailed new legislation stating how public schooling is to be improved and democratized. Although overall state funding has not decreased in dollar amounts, the state has reduced funding for central office staff and, as a result, some counties are increasing class sizes. The Director of Cabell County's Vocational-Technical and Adult Education Program refers to this "absolute paradox" as a "double whammy." He said that in March and April of 1991, 43 Cabell County School professionals and 24 service personnel received termination notices. (However, issuing termination notices is a precautionary measure and not all these people will actually be terminated.) Statewide, some 900 public education professionals lost their jobs during academic year 1990-91. Cabell County has recently been suffering a net loss of about 300 students annually. Such attrition will probably continue until the year 2000.

This case study was conducted by two researchers from The Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University over a four-day period, May 13-16, 1991. The Evaluation Center has contracted to serve as the Appalachia Educational Laboratory's external evaluator. Information was collected primarily through 26 interviews (see the Appendix for a list of these persons), collected during visits to the school district's central administration offices, 11 schools, Marshall University, a local newspaper, and the office of the local Regional Education Services Agency (RESA II). An effort was also made to travel, camera in hand, as widely as possible in the city of Huntington and in Cabell County. We have also relied heavily on document analysis, including documents supplied to us by AEL and Cabell County Public School District.

SYSTEMIC ANALYSIS

These wider contextual realities--social, economic, historical, cultural--are systemic in the sense that they interact complexly and must be understood holistically. It makes little sense to focus upon Cabell County alone without considering the system in which the county is inextricably embedded. In an effort to enliven and substantiate this wider Cabell County system, we have included in this case study a section of black and white photographs entitled, "Images of Cabell County, West Virginia" (beginning following page 25). These 26 consecutively numbered photographs are periodically referred to in the text. The photos provide some visual documentation of the city of Huntington; surrounding towns; Marshall University; and, of course, Cabell County School District and the people who make the school system work.

Many of the references at the end of this case study report come from Education Week and have been used to document developments in recent years in West Virginia education. The section of the report entitled "Chronology of Recent West Virginia Education Events" has made considerable use of these articles.

Geographical and Historical Contexts

West Virginia has the highest mean altitude (1,500 feet) of any state east of the Mississippi River. Even today, three-quarters of the state is forested. The western two-thirds of the state consists of the Appalachian Plateau Region whose often steeply mountainous terrain has waterways flowing westward into the Ohio River which, in turn, flows past such urban areas as Wheeling, Parkersburg, Weirton, and Huntington. West Virginia's urban, industrial growth has historically been focused along its waterways. These urban places have, in turn, exerted much influence over the more rural areas.

According to Gunter (1986:1-2), during the mid-1700s white settlers used Indian trails or the Ohio River to cross the Appalachian Mountains into what is now Cabell County. Shawnee Indians had until then claimed the area as their hunting grounds. The village of Barboursville, located a few miles east of Huntington on the Guyandotte River, was established in 1813 with a population of about 339 people. By 1840 Barboursville had become a manufacturing center for fans, furniture, wagons, buggies, and harnesses. The land in the area was considered fertile for farming and the timber industry. In 1887 the county seat was moved from Barboursville to Huntington. After the Civil War, the completion of the C & O Railroad into Huntington secured that riverside town's political and commercial predominance.

West Virginia separated from Virginia and became a state in 1863, thereby refusing to join Virginia in seceding from the Union. Previously West Virginia had been known as the Trans-Allegheny Region of Virginia. By the late 19th century, bituminous coal (found throughout the state but mined mostly in the south) had become the state's leading industrial product. Commercial agriculture is mostly limited to the eastern panhandle region.

The historian Alexander-Williams (1976) speaks of the state's "colonial political economy" in which, by the 1880s and 1890s, extractive industries such as coal mining and logging were transporting by rail the state's wealth beyond its own borders. To this day, West Virginia seldom seems to benefit from its own considerable natural wealth. Charleston, located 45 miles east of Huntington, became the permanent state capital in 1885 at a time when legal and financial interests supportive of the extractive economy were coalescing there. Huntington, located at the confluence of the Ohio and Guyandotte Rivers, was founded as the terminus of the coal-hauling Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad and was named for the railroad's president. Today, Huntington has the state's largest port and only tobacco market along with glass and chemical industries (see photos 1-3).

By 1900, according to Alexander-Williams, both the state's Democratic and Republican parties were firmly controlled by West Virginian industrialists. By 1913, there was violence in the coal fields, record flooding in the valleys, and a further consolidation of the colonial political economy. "Appalachia" was taking its modern shape. Labor troubles continued and, in 1921, the National Guard and the U.S. Army were called in. Only in 1933-35 were labor unions in the state legally allowed to organize.

West Virginia Economic and Social Variables

The state's population declined steadily from the 1950s until the 1970s as its extractive industries modernized, contracted, or declined. The population peaked at about 2,005,000 in 1950, fell to 1,744,000 in 1970, rebounded to 1,950,000 in 1980, but fell again to 1,918,000 by 1986. The state's three largest cities have shown the following recent, steady population declines:

	1960	1970	1980	1988 (est.)[1]
Charleston	85,000	71,000	63,968	55,730
Huntington	83,000	74,000	58,685	51,730
Wheeling	53,000	48,000	42,874	38,770

By the late 1980s, West Virginia's economy may have finally started reviving after decades of decline (Stevens 1986:A18). Between 1979 and 1985, West Virginia lost nearly thirty percent of its manufacturing jobs and fully one-third of its jobs in the already lean and automated coal industry. In 1986, manufacturing represented only 15 percent of all state jobs versus 25-28 percent in the 1950s and 1960s. The coal industry in 1986 claimed only 6 percent of all jobs contrasted to 22-23 percent in the early 1950s when automation first hit the state's coal mines. Recently, however, there has been growth in such service sectors as tourism, health care, and high technology; trade, finance, insurance, and real estate have also grown. In 1986, for the first time since 1982, West Virginia did not have the nation's highest rate of unemployment.

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[1] Current Population Reports: Local Population Estimates: South, Series P-26, No. 88-S-SC. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March 1990.

Various other socioeconomic indicators (from Digest of Education Statistics, 1990 [U.S. Department of Education, February 1991]) may clarify West Virginia's present situation. West Virginia lost 32,000 residents between 1980 and 1986, a 1.6 percent decrease (only Iowa and the District of Columbia had larger decreases). During 1985-1986, West Virginia's civilian labor force declined by 2.7 percent, the biggest drop in the U.S. In 1985, West Virginia's per capita income of $8,141 was the second lowest in the U.S., surpassed only by Mississippi's $7,483. West Virginia's total state personal income increased by 25.4 percent during 1980-84, the smallest increase in U.S. save for Wyoming's 19.8 percent. West Virginia was the only state in which total 1984 farm earnings declined (by $17.2 million). In 1985, West Virginia had the third highest rate of social security beneficiaries in the U.S., 184.7 per 1,000 residents.

In short, West Virginia's population (and labor force) is shrinking, aging, and becoming more dependent upon government benefits. Per capita income is low and rising only slowly. Overall farm income is actually declining. Unemployment is high. Such factors tend to impinge directly upon school districts such as Cabell County's.

Cultural, Racial, and Gender Factors

Not only economic factors impact education's climate and characteristics. Historically, mountainous West Virginia had a population consisting mostly of small Scotch-Irish and German farmers with neither the wealth nor the need for much slavery, a situation contrasting to that of Virginia's affluent tidewater planters to the east. Following the Civil War, some freed slaves came to live in West Virginia although the state's African-American population today is less than 5 percent. In 1986, West Virginia's public school enrollment was 95.9 percent Caucasian (the largest Caucasian student percentage in the U.S. after Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire) and 3.7 percent African-American, 0.3 percent Asian or Pacific, and 0.1 percent Hispanic. West Virginia is the only U.S. state with no recorded American Indian student population, although the Iroquois and Cherokee once lived there. Around 1900 immigrants from Hungary, Ireland, Italy, and Poland came to work in the state's mining industry. Methodist and Baptist are the state's two major religious denominations today.

As might be surmised from above, a visitor to the Huntington area and its schools quickly notices that--as is true throughout the state of West Virginia--the population is predominantly white; minority people are seldom seen. Consequently, racial and ethnic considerations are not of paramount importance. Of the district's thirty-nine schools, ten elementary schools--over 25 percent of all schools--have female principals. Furthermore, approximately one-third of the district's central administration professional staff members are women.

West Virginia Law and Politics

The state's courts have often been in the news in recent years as they have both dealt with political malfeasance (including that of former Governor Arch Moore) and determined the future of West Virginia's education system. A 1989 New York Times article (September 18, p. A14) by B. Drummond Ayres Jr., entitled "Corruption Case Leaves State in Search of Ethics," notes that some observers believe that West Virginia has developed "state-of-the-art techniques" in "vote theft, contract kickbacks, influence peddling, and good old bribery, exploitation, fraud, tax evasion and outright stealing." During July-September of 1989, five key state government officials, including the treasurer, attorney general, and senate president, had run afoul of the law. An Episcopal priest who headed the state branch of Common Cause commented, "It's hard to tell whether West Virginia is a state of mind, a state of chaos or just a good soap opera."

West Virginia Education

A statistical portrait of West Virginia education includes the following "snapshots" of how West Virginia compares nationally (from Digest of Education Statistics, 1990 [U.S. Department of Education, February 1991]):

- In 1988, West Virginia's pupil-teacher ratio of 15.1:1 was the 11th lowest in the nation. **(U.S. average: 17.4:1)**
- In 1980, West Virginia was last in the nation in terms of the percentages of its population completing 1-3 years of college (20.4 percent) and 4 or more years of college (10.4 percent). **(U.S. averages: 31.9 percent and 16.2 percent respectively)**
- In 1980, West Virginia was last in the nation (save for Kentucky with 68.7 percent) in terms of the percentage of its population having at least 1-3 years of high school (72 percent). **(U.S. average: 81.7 percent)**
- During 1984-1989, West Virginia and Michigan were the two states showing the largest decreases (5 percent or more) in public elementary and secondary enrollments.

-- In 1988-89, West Virginia's estimated average salary for public school teachers was $22,949, the third lowest average in the U.S. after South Dakota's ($21,510) and Arkansas's ($22,416). **(U.S. average: $30,957)** (However, according to the National Education Association's annual report released on May 7, 1991, West Virginia's public school teachers also registered the largest average percentage salary increase in the nation between 1989-90 and 1990-91, 13.11 percent, resulting in a 1990-91 average salary of $25,958.

-- West Virginia's 1987-88 expenditures for public elementary and secondary education included 48.3 percent for instruction, 46.7 percent for support services, and 5 percent for noninstructional. This percentage for instruction is the lowest in the U.S. **(U.S. average: 61.7 percent)** On the other hand, West Virginia's percentage spent on support services is the nation's highest. **(U.S. average: 35 percent)**

These facts tend to reflect larger economic and demographic patterns. For example, the small percentage (compared to the national average) spent on public school instruction may be partly explained by the state's traditionally low teacher salaries. It might be inferred that the state's difficult economic conditions have contributed to the increase of personal and behavioral problems in the schools which in turn has increased the demand for support services.

Chronology of Recent West Virginia Educational Funding Events

In order to gain a more complete perspective on the West Virginia educational climate, it is helpful to consider a chronology of recent statewide legal and budgetary events, most of which have been gleaned from issues of Education Week. Cabell County Schools' current restructuring process must be understood within the context of such recent funding developments, including the following:

1975 Parent Janet Pauley of Lincoln County (adjacent to Cabell County and one of the state's poorest counties) filed a class action suit contending that state financing discriminated against counties with less property wealth.

May 11, 1982 Judge Arthur Recht issued a 244-page opinion defining "quality" education in the state and saying that the courts--not educators--have the power to establish state standards. He said that all students have the right to a "thorough and efficient" system of free common schools. Recht ruled that the widespread use of "excess property-tax levies" is unconstitutional because poorer counties cannot use these to support education.

1984 Both Governor Rockefeller and the legislature said they would make education the number one agenda this year; voters defeated a proposal that would have earmarked funds for increased state aid and distributed excess levy funds from a statewide pool--in short, taking from the rich and giving to the poor counties.

Spring 1985 Governor Arch Moore vetoed $10 million in pay raises for West Virginia teachers intended to equalize salaries in all counties. In late August, a circuit court judge ruled that Moore could not veto these raises because it violated the constitution's mandate for a "thorough and efficient" education system.

April 1986 Governor Moore vetoed an omnibus education bill approved by the legislature that would have raised educators' salaries.

December 10, 1986 The state, with only $13,000 in its treasury, had to postpone payment of $34 million in state aid to local school districts. (West Virginia counties normally receive about 60 percent of their operating revenue from the state.)

January 1987 Governor Moore called for a 10 percent increase in teachers' salaries and said he wanted 1987 to be "the year for education in West Virginia."

May 1987 Legislators approved a second fiscal 1988 state budget, but Moore vetoed it--and the legislature overrode his veto.

November 1987 Two blue-ribbon commissions issued proposals for sweeping state educational reforms.

February 1988 The Kanawha County School District took legal action against the state (then six weeks behind on its school-aid payments) to force the immediate release of $10 million to districts.

February 23, 1988 The state supreme court struck down a $1.49 billion state budget, saying it failed to support the constitution's "thorough and efficient" public school system.

Late February 1988 The state tightened criteria for classifying students as handicapped or gifted, an attempt to reclassify 10,000 special-education students and 1,600 staff positions and to thus save $29 million over five years.

March 1988 A ballot proposal was voted on that would set a statewide limit on excess levy rates, limiting the ability of wealthy districts to outspend less affluent ones. "Currently, county districts are permitted to levy a portion of their property tax without voter approval. They can also seek voter approval for an 'excess' levy that can be as much as 100 percent of the nonvoter-approved millage. The existence of the excess-levy option has been at the heart of the state's school-finance controversy" (Mirga, 1988:10). The amendment would have established a 90 percent excess levy for all districts.

Late November 1988 The state high court reversed Judge Recht's 1982 ruling that a law permitting county school districts to seek excess property-tax levies violated the constitution; the court decided that the constitution expressly authorizes such levies.

January 13, 1989 State teachers turned to the state supreme court to force the legislature to allocate $200 million a year for their pension account; otherwise, the fund would be broke by 1991.

January 19, 1989 Governor Gaston Caperton was sworn in and called for the largest tax increase in state history along with stiff budget cuts, including education. The legislature assented.

February 1989 Governor Caperton called for an ambitious $500 million school construction program along with proposals to shore up the nearly bankrupt teacher retirement fund, pay off overdue medical claims, provide a salary increase to teachers, and provide remedial education. He also called for a bold constitutional amendment that would reconstitute the state board of education, allow the Governor to appoint the state school superintendent, and create a new post of secretary of education and the arts.

February 9, 1989 State voters overwhelmingly defeated (by 217,409 to 29,030 votes) an amendment which, among other things, would have given the Governor and the legislature greatly expanded powers to shape the top level of educational policy making. Voters were said to be highly unhappy with the $400 million tax increase adopted by the legislature earlier in the year.

April 10, 1989 West Virginia legislators boosted state school aid by 18 percent and bailed out the nearly insolvent teacher pension fund.

March 7, 1990 West Virginia's first statewide teachers' strike (voted on by teachers on a county-by-county basis) started after an agreement with Governor Caperton for salary increases unraveled; the strike was eventually to last 11 days. The strike was declared illegal by the state's attorney general.

March 14, 1990 As the statewide strike entered its second week, the state superintendent ordered all schools closed for a "cooling-off period." On March 13, after two days of negotiations with the two unions, the West Virginia Education Association and West Virginia Federation of Teachers, the governor proposed a plan to end the strike: shift $3 million intended to buy computers for elementary schools to teacher salaries; work with the legislature to ensure that $20 million is allocated to "equalize" teacher salaries across the state; hold an "education summit" in May 1990.

Teachers were also demanding a secure retirement system and health insurance. The governor's latest proposal made no mention of a tax increase on coal, presumably because the state's powerful coal lobby opposed it. ("'King Coal' and the timber industry are widely viewed as controlling the legislature, which many teachers say gives big business unfair tax advantages. 'The feeling many people have is that a lot of out-of-state landlords who own a great portion of the state capitalize on the wealth and leave nothing behind,' Mr. Lautar of the W.V.F.T. said." [Bradley, March 21, 1990]) Before the strike began, the West Virginia Education Association had suggested that the legislature pass an "excess acreage tax" on landowners (not farmers) with more than 1,000 acres--this to require coal and timber companies to pay their "fair share" of state taxes.

Cabell County Indicators

The following data, taken from County and City Data Book, 1988 (U.S. Department of Commerce, May 1988), are intended to give some sense of how Cabell County compares with state's 54 other counties.

-- The county's population declined by 2,100 in 1980-86.

-- The county's 1984 population was 95.61 percent white compared to the state average of 96.26 percent.

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-- Cabell County had the highest 1985 rate of serious crimes of any county in the state, 5,298 per 100,000 residents. **(State average: 2,234 per 100,000 residents)**

-- The county's public school enrollment declined by 2,517 between 1980 and 1986-87, from 18,860 to 16,343.

-- Cabell County's 1982 per capita local government expenditure for education was $414, the sixth lowest total of the state's 55 counties. **(State average: $454)**

-- The county's 1985 per capita income was $9,323, the fourth highest total of any county in the state. **(State average: $8,141)**

-- Cabell County had a net loss of 55 private nonfarm business establishments between 1984 and 1985, the biggest drop of any county in the state.

-- The county had the highest 1982 per capita retail sales of any county in the state, $6,090. **(State average:** $3,835)

-- Cabell County expended 31.8 percent of its 1981-82 local government finances (direct general expenditures) on education, the lowest percentage of any county in the state. **(State average: 56 percent)**

The above figures speak of a relatively urbanized county whose rate of crime is high and whose largely white population--and student enrollment--is declining in size. Businesses are also being lost at a higher than average rate. Although the county's per capita incomes and retail purchasing power are relatively high, expenditures on education are low by state standards.

Marshall University

Any systemic analysis of Cabell County School District needs to consider Marshall University, which strongly influences Cabell County teachers' preservice and inservice educational preparation. Occupying 60 level acres on 4 ½ blocks of downtown Huntington, Marshall University is advertised in a brochure as "West Virginia's oldest school" (see photos 22-25). The pleasant, tree-lined campus mixes older and newer architecture. "Old Main," the administration building just off Hal Greer Boulevard, appears cramped and badly in need of interior renovation. Brown-bricked Jenkins Hall houses the College of Education. The city immediately surrounding the campus appears generally clean and prosperous, as does much of Huntington.

The university began its existence in 1837 as Marshall Academy and became the West Virginia State Normal School at Marshall College in 1867. The Teachers College (later the College of Education) was formed in 1920. Marshall's first graduate level instruction was offered in 1939. The Graduate School was formed in 1948. University status was gained in 1961.

Marshall University, along with West Virginia University in Morgantown, are the state's only public universities. One Cabell County Schools central administrator referred to West Virginia University as "the other" university in the state, Marshall's "rich cousin," so to speak. For example, West Virginia University is a Doctoral Level 1 institution whereas Marshall is Doctoral Level 3.

A College of Education brochure claims, "In addition to more than 40 teaching options, the College trains persons to be counselors, athletic trainers, parks and leisure service directors, sports information or broadcasting personalities, and safety directors." Teacher education majors are offered in Early Childhood, Middle Childhood, Adolescent Education, and Special Education. A 4-year teacher education major (which actually requires closer to 4 ½ years, according to the Director of Teacher Education) involves two years of general education courses followed by subject matter courses and the professional education component, including clinical classes and experiences. The Ed.D. in Educational Administration is one of only three terminal degrees offered by the university, the other two being the Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences and the M.D. The first two degrees are offered in cooperation with West Virginia University.

Due largely to the fact that classes were not in session at the time of our visit, only two College of Education faculty members were interviewed for this case study. We had also intended to interview the Dean of the College of Education, but she was unavailable that day. Another faculty member was unable to meet with us at the appointed time. As a result, we are aware that the following discussion of Marshall University's interaction with AEL may not be as detailed and revealing as it might otherwise have been.

The Director of Teacher Education is a West Virginia native (born and educated in the southern part of the state) who earned his BA and MA from Marshall and his Ph.D. from Ohio University. He admitted that he was not very familiar with AEL. He did know that a few of their workshops had been attended by his faculty and that the College of Education's Division of Health, Physical Education and Recreation (HPER) has done some (unidentified) work with AEL.

The Director described Marshall's teacher education program, which has 300-400 graduates per year. (By contrast, West Virginia University has fewer than 300 teacher education graduates annually.) Teacher education majors do clinicals during the sophomore, junior, and senior years; 90 percent of the sophomore clinicals are done in Cabell County schools. A higher percentage of the more senior students go outside Cabell County (to Wayne, Mingo, and Logan Counties) to gain clinical experience. He estimated that 60-70 percent of all of the university's teacher practicums occur in Cabell County schools. Also, probably 30-40 percent of Marshall's teacher graduates go out of state to work, especially to Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas.

He said that Cabell County teachers can earn Marshall University credits by taking Professional Development Courses (560-563), often at sites away from the university. Some 500 such student openings were requested for Fall 1991. Sometimes Cabell County Public Schools personnel teach these Marshall University courses (at both the undergraduate and graduate levels), although the university requires that such instructors possess at least a masters degree. The Director said that relations between Cabell County Public Schools and the College of Education were good.

The Director of Teacher Education said that Superintendent Brewster has had a more active, open administration than his predecessors. Positive developments have included the adoption of middle schools and increased staff development. The Director said that Brewster had been hired several years ago as Cabell County's assistant superintendent as an "outsider" (from neighboring Mason County), a fact that prejudiced some people against him since Cabell County had traditionally "hired from within."

The other faculty member interviewed has taught at Marshall University for eleven years. His wife is employed by the local Regional Education Services Agency (RESA II), one of eight such agencies in the state. He said that RESA's have extensive experience in staff development and in running workshops. (By contrast, a Cabell County Board of Education member told us that the school district does more for RESA II than the latter does for the district.) His specialties are middle childhood and secondary education, and his special interests include economic perspectives on education and the process of training a knowledgeable work force.

He said he knew little about AEL despite receiving its mailings. He thought that some other divisions of the College, such as educational administration, might have more association with AEL. He did say that, in his opinion, the local public school district's greatest needs include modernized facilities, better math and science programs, and the development of students' self-esteem, cultural pride, and willingness to take risks. He believes that Cabell County School District is a major educational innovator, one of the top three or four counties in the country. He foresees majors improvements in the district, including good staff development.

A Local Newspaper

The reporting by Huntington newspapers influences local perceptions of the schools. The school district's Director of School/Community Relations said in a meeting that the city's daily newspaper, the Huntington Herald Dispatch, has not done much regular coverage of public schools. She said that the weekly paper, the Cabell Courier, has generally done a better job of coverage, including its weekly "Focus" section.

We interviewed the editor of the Cabell Courier, who has held that position for about a year. He had no knowledge of AEL. Concerning the "town meetings" that Cabell County Public School District has been holding recently in order to encourage community input into the district's restructuring process, he contends that these meetings tend to be held after the fact and thus cannot truly make use of community viewpoints. (This interpretation was strongly contrasted by those of the district's Director of School/Community Relations, who said that the town meetings had in fact sought and obtained community viewpoints used in decision making.) The editor said that, traditionally, Cabell County has supported public education well. He said that when the $45 million bond was passed last year, a $1.5 million levy to repair county roads failed badly.

The editor responded to questions about local economy and politics. The current mayor of Huntington, Robert Nelson, had previously been in the state senate for many years and had then unsuccessfully tried to win election as West Virginia's Secretary of State. Having lost that election, Nelson has now effectively "devolved" to the mayorship. The editor says that Nelson has tried to be a strong mayor, but this has been difficult in a city that for years has resisted a strong, centralized city government. Only in 1985 was the city charter changed so that the city manager office was replaced by a mayor.

A prime example of Huntington's fractured politics is "Super Block," a nine-block downtown area adjacent to the offices of the Cabell Courier. The area was razed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, supposedly for new construction, and is still a "parking lot" that the city, and certain city merchants, has never been able to agree on how to use. Consequently, Huntington lost a large mall complex that had originally been slated for construction on Super Block. Now, ironically, the "Huntington Mall" is located in Ona, east of Huntington; and the town of Barboursville receives the mall's tax revenues. This mall competes seriously with downtown Huntington business, as do two malls recently constructed in nearby Ashland, Kentucky.

CABELL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Cabell County Public School District is one of 55 county districts in the state. The district presently consists of 39 schools: 26 elementary schools (grades K-5), 8 middle schools (grades 6-8), 4 high schools (grades 9-12), and a vocational-technical center.

The district's central administration office building is located on Twentieth Street in Huntington. This imposing, brown brick building was built in 1908 and was originally called Holderby School, an elementary school consisting of grades 1-6 (see photo

4). Part of the building was first used for district administrative purposes as early as 1946, although students were still being taught there in the late 1950s. Today the district employs approximately 69 staff members at central administration including the superintendent, three assistant superintendents, a business manager/treasurer, and staff employed by administrative services, special services, the department of instruction, and the audiovisual center (see photos 5-7).

Apart from the Ohio River-side city of Huntington in the western corner, the county is overwhelmingly rural, wooded, and very hilly. Outside of Huntington, schools are located either in small towns such as Barboursville, Milton, or Culloden, themselves situated on or near Interstate 64, which links Huntington with Charleston, or in such hamlets as Central, Salt Rock, or Pea Ridge (see photos 9 and 19). Many of these tiny communities are located along either the Guyandotte or Mud Rivers. One such rural school is Martha Elementary located on an attractive, spacious site in the hills outside of the town of Barboursville (see photos 15-16). The principal of Culloden Elementary School (220 students) at the eastern edge of the county, a plain-spoken man who says he prefers the pace of country life, told us that he hails from rural Kanawha County. "I'm from Pinch on Tator Creek near Quick," he said, dryly and proudly (see photo 14).

Many of the school facilities are old and outdated. The district's oldest school building still in use (Barboursville Middle School) was constructed in 1850 (see photo 10); 7 schools were originally constructed (many schools have had more recent additions) between 1903 and 1917, 5 during the 1920s, 10 during the 1930s, none during the 1940s, 10 during the 1950s, 3 during the 1960s, none during the 1970s, and 2 during the 1980s. Thus, of the 38 schools first constructed during the present century, the average year of first construction was 1940. Such aged structures, when combined with expanding class sizes and diminishing maintenance funds, clearly have put a strain on the district. One example: the principal of Beverly Hills Middle School, widely considered to be one of the district's better schools, said that the clocks and class bells in his school haven't worked for years; fixing them, he said, has never been a high priority (see photo 18). Such factors have helped persuade voters to pass recently a $45 million bond issue that will allow for extensive renovation and new construction.

The district has a 1990-91 student enrollment of approximately 14,500 with over 1,100 teachers and other professional staff. There has been a modest but steady enrollment decline during the 1980s. The decade started when enrollment was approximately 19,000 students. A continuing decline in enrollment is anticipated for the 1990s, with student enrollment leveling off at around 11,400 students by the year 2000. Nonpublic school enrollment (almost entirely in church-related schools) comprises less than 5 percent of the total.

In a 1989 survey of Cabell County eleventh graders, it was found that 35 per cent planned to attend a four-year college with another 11 percent planning to attend a two-year college. These results indicate relatively high postsecondary educational aspirations. During the middle 1980s the number of student dropouts declined to a low of 99 in 1987. A dropout prevention program was initiated in 1983 and its effects apparently were manifested beginning in 1985, when the decline in numbers first appeared. However, since 1988 there has been a modest increase in the number of dropouts.

Instructional Organization and the Curriculum

Cabell County elementary schools have self-contained classrooms with flexibility for collaborative teaching teams at the teachers' discretion. Middle schools are organized by interdisciplinary teams that provide core instruction. Each student has a "core" teacher, and this teacher in turn has around 28-30 "core" students. The high schools have traditional classes in a departmentalized structure with interdisciplinary departments (for example, the humanities). There are provisions for vocational training, presently conducted at the vocational-technical center.

The district's curriculum is defined very broadly--in essence, "the sum total of a student's experience while that student is in school." The curriculum attempts to address all areas of students' academic, affective, and cultural needs, and the curriculum attempts to provide a positive student climate in the schools. Students experiencing academic difficulties are provided with remedial programs; appropriate programs are also provided for gifted and talented students and for students experiencing problems with alcohol and other drugs, at-risk students, and student dropouts. There is a balance of structure and openness in the way instruction is conducted, allowing teachers adequate flexibility yet insuring integrity in the delivery of instruction.

The educational environment is extended beyond the classroom through several activities designed to enhance school-community relations. These activities range from quite structured programs such as the cooperative education program to informal programs such as the community use of the gymnasium and library. The cooperative education program provides work sites for vocational education, mentorships, career exploration, and community service projects volunteering. Students participate in a variety of field trips. School-community communications involve school newsletters and the use of the local media. All in all, the district's quite traditional curriculum is comprehensive and well planned.

School Facilities

Declining enrollment forced the closure of 13 district schools during the 1980s, and future declines are expected to require at least 5 more closures. The program will eliminate the 2 most antiquated and inefficient facilities in the school district. The new facilities and the reorganization of the school boundaries will allow for maximum staff utilization and savings in school operation.

The school facilities plan was the culmination of about 15 years of self-examination and needs assessments. There was a detailed evaluation of individual existing school buildings that rated the schools on various factors such as traffic flow and handicapped accessibility. There were estimated costs for upgrading present facilities and for new construction. School buildings varied greatly on these factors. Following each school's evaluation, a long-term projection is given for its most appropriate disposition.

It should be said that some district facilities are relatively new and in excellent condition, such as the Cabell County Vocational-Technical Center, built in 1981 (see photo 17). Others, though, are very old and in poor condition, such as Barboursville Middle School, built in 1850 (see photo 10). For the sake of illustration, the District's 1990 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan (p. 83) has this to say about the latter school (which is admittedly by far the District's oldest school): "The original building was constructed in 1850 . . . Additions to the public schools were constructed in 1938, 1950, 1961, 1981, and 1983. . . . The art room is located in a separate building and is in poor condition with walls showing water damage. The library is located in the old church and should be replaced because of its deteriorating exterior condition. The hallways are dark and have very high ceilings. There is a problem with movement of students through the hall at the library steps. Ventilation is poor throughout the building. The exterior of the building shows obvious cracks and separations. The roof leaks and needs to be replaced. Water leaks around the windows of the second floor and the plaster is falling off the walls."

An overview of the building program is given below. The enrollment of the four high schools and the vocational-technical center will be combined into two new, comprehensive high schools, grades 9-12, each designed for 2,000 students. Barboursville and Milton High Schools (dating from 1924 and 1926 respectively) will be consolidated into a new high school to be located at the site of the present-day Ona Middle School (see photos 11-13 and 20-21). For example, Milton High School's older wing's facilities are described in part as follows: "Classroom doors do not meet the fire code specification and need to be replaced throughout the buildings. . . . The hallways and classrooms are lighted with incandescent lights of low intensity that is totally inadequate. .

. . Dressing rooms for the gymnasium are under the bleachers and are dark and dirty in appearance."

Meanwhile, Huntington High School and Huntington East High School (which date from 1924 and 1939 respectively) will be consolidated into a single new school at a city site. According to the District's 1990 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan, the construction of these two new schools will allow all Cabell County high school students to "have the opportunity to obtain a four year high school education in a school designed to provide an exemplary curriculum for our technological and informational society." The facilities plan provides for vocational curricular offerings at the two new high schools. Until then, the present vocational-technology center will continue to be used for vocational programs. Afterward, the vo-tech center will be used for adult vocational education.

The four high schools now in operation will be converted to middle schools. Elementary schools will be renovated as needed, and decisions about consolidation will be made according to enrollment patterns. The facilities plan includes a ten-year construction and renovation schedule. Individual projects are prioritized and then scheduled. Not all renovation can be funded through the monies generated by the bond issue. Bonded indebtedness or SBA funds will be necessary for major renovations.

Process Used for Developing the School Facilities Plan

Earlier it was mentioned that Cabell County's long-range plan for educational change and improvement, including its facilities plan, resulted from a series of self-studies and needs assessments conducted over an extended period. Two such interrelated activities merit special mention.

In March 1987 the Cabell County Board of Education and the Huntington Area Chamber of Commerce sponsored a one-day, needs assessment conference called "Taking the Pulse." This was conducted at 10 district-wide sites: the 10 junior high school attendance areas. The conference was scheduled from 1:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m., with dinner being served. Invitations were sent to 302 citizens, 135 of whom stated a willingness to participate in the conference. Of these 135, 126 citizens actually participated, the number of participants ranging between 8 and 17 across the 10 sites.

The conference generated a total of 622 needs statements or an average of about 62 statements per site. These needs statements went through a process of clarification and synthesis. The conference's concluding activity was to rate the importance of the needs on a five-point scale and then, based on these ratings, to rank order the needs in terms of importance.

Following the conference three researchers analyzed the needs statements and placed them into 36 categories. These categories--a "mixed bag" covering all aspects of school operation--were ranked in order of importance by averaging the site rank of each statement within the category. Not all categories were represented at all sites; in fact less than 15 percent (5) of the categories were represented by needs statements at all sites. As assessed by the community, the ten most critical needs of the district's schools, in rank order, were:

1. Facilities: General
2. Funding
3. Basic Skills
4. Critical Thinking
5. Instructional Materials and Supplies
6. Equity: Personnel and Programs
7. Building Maintenance
8. Athletics vs. Academics
9. Teacher Incentives
10. Standards for Teachers and Administrators

The report suggested that a school-community committee structure be used as the planning mechanism for meeting the needs. As a result, a 20-member steering committee, the Cabell County Citizens' Advisory Council, consisting of ten members each from the school system and the community, was then established. The board of education president and the superintendent of schools served as ex officio committee members. The committee established four subcommittees: (1) Facilities and Transportation, (2) Curriculum and Instruction, (3) Personnel, and (4) Community Relations. The subcommittees did an audit of the present program, using the feedback from the needs assessment (as provided in the AEL report) as well as information, both factual and projected, from other sources. The subcommittees prepared reports and recommendations and reported back to the steering committee.

State Level Impact Upon School Operation

The West Virginia legislature, through the department of education, exerts considerable control over local school operations. Teachers' salaries are established with fixed, if any, increments. As indicated earlier, in recent years West Virginia's average teachers salaries have been some of the nation's lowest, although substantial percentage raises are now in process. The state establishes the ratio of professional educators to students, a ratio that has recently been reduced from 55 to 53.5 professionals per 1,000 students. At the monthly principals' meeting held during our site visit, an extensive, 70-page policies document comparing existing and proposed policies was reviewed. This document attests to how closely the state tries to oversee public education.

Cabell County School District's professional staff, especially central office administrators and principals, do not seem to see such state direction and involvement as entirely desirable. For example, one professional expressed the opinion that the district has little real control in building programs because school systems must comply with the rules of the State School Building Commission.

To some extent, state involvement is perceived as setting higher and higher expectations for the local schools while providing less money for attaining these expectations.

School Climate: Professional Staff Perceptions

During our site visit numerous professional staff members of Cabell County Schools were interviewed including central office staff, principals, teachers, and other professional support staff (see the Appendix for a full list of persons interviewed). Professional morale generally seems to be reasonably high throughout the district considering all the changes now occurring. Morale is possibly slightly higher at the upper levels of the educational hierarchy, as in the central offices, although even here there is disagreement. For example, two central administrators were asked in interviews to characterize the district's current level of morale. One person said unequivocally that it was quite good overall, both in the schools and in the central offices, despite all of the restructuring going on. When the question was posed to a colleague down the hall, this person answered more problematically, saying that district personnel generally are rather "reserved" and even uneasy today because of all the layoffs, changes, and uncertainty going on; this person described district teachers as "trying hard not to be down."

Several factors are impacting positively and negatively on morale.

Professional staff generally view very positively the passing of the $45 million bond issue as evidence of community support for the schools. It will allow for improved facilities. Many professionals also see it as a means for improving curriculum delivery. One elementary teacher had a rather negative attitude about reorganization and the building plans, believing that schools would become too large. She believed that, with enrollments declining, the present facilities are adequate. Neither was she optimistic about West Virginia's economic future, commenting, "Things will not change in the next 100 years." With that perspective, it is easy to understand why she was not in favor of the building plan. However, this same teacher was positive about the elementary school program.

Cabell County's reorganization into the new middle school/high school structure has been widely accepted. However, there is some concern about a possible increase in discipline problems resulting from the new middle school format. Overall, about 10 percent of those interviewed expressed concern about the ninth graders (especially the boys) "getting lost" and having social adjustment problems in the new large high schools. One high school principal interviewed expressed special concern about the discipline problems caused by including relatively immature ninth graders in the high school, even to the extent of these students' family feuds being carried on in the confines of the school. This same principal said that for the past 2-3 years "nothing has been normal" at his school as a result of consolidation. He said that the previous academic year--when ninth graders entered the high school for the first time--was the toughest year he's ever had as an educator.

The entire restructuring and consolidation process has understandably concerned the district's professional staff. Based upon numerous discussions with Cabell County educators, we came to understand that "consolidation" basically refers to the process of reducing the total number of schools in the district, some of which will be new, expanded schools equipped to serve larger numbers of students; "restructuring," which is closely related to consolidation, includes such systemic changes as introducing middle schools. The most obvious concern is over the possible loss of professional positions. As mentioned earlier, there is a new state mandate that has reduced the number of professionals allowed per 1,000 students from 55 to 53.5. Criteria for reducing the number of professionals involve several traditional factors (e.g., seniority, skills, need for teachers in a specific subject). It appears that this process is generally regarded as reasonably fair and unbiased, although not entirely so. Two middle school teachers were asked, Who will get the jobs in the restructured schools? They said that in elementary schools, for example, principals usually make that decision on the basis of seniority alone, the implication being that this was the easy way out since these principals didn't have to pay any attention to the teachers' actual abilities or performances.

Professional staff tend to view consolidation as unfortunate but necessary for economic efficiency and in order to provide the most comprehensive curriculum. As one high school principal put it, the overall consolidation process "has caused widespread concern in the district, although I would not call it stress." Geographically, the farther east one goes in the district--and thus the farther away from urban Huntington--the less receptive people tend to be to consolidation. These more rural communities often perceive themselves as losing the benefits of smaller attendance areas. The principal of one rural elementary school is wary of consolidation's "bigger is better" philosophy. He wonders if "cost efficiency" is really meeting student needs, although he credits central administration with sincerely seeking input and trying to deal with the district's problems.

Cabell County District's professional staff generally considers the curriculum to be very good and improving as the building program is implemented and completed. Programs in the schools, such as the IBM "Writing to Write" Program, are enthusiastically supported by the staff. However, the staff's perceptions of the school climate available to students varied considerably. Generally, the higher the grade level the more discipline problems become an issue. One rural elementary school principal felt that the outlying schools have better discipline than those in the city because the former's parents are more cooperative and have more respect for the schools.

On the other hand, the principal of a small town high school had experienced that there is often a lack of parental support and a lack of enforcement of the rules intended to keep students in school. His biggest problems are tardiness and truancy. According to him, many students doubt the benefit of attending high school, and there are few penalties when they do skip school. He said that a high school student can now miss as many as 60-70 days of class and still pass and not lose credit. He observed that the middle 65 percent of students are capable of achieving more but have little motivation to do so; meanwhile, the top 10 percent excel and the bottom 25 percent get little support at home and dismiss the value of formal education.

Yet, across Cabell County School District students seem to be achieving well, problems such as drug abuse are not perceived as being especially acute, and discipline was not identified as a major problem in any of the schools visited.

As discussed earlier, West Virginia's teachers are still among the lowest paid in the nation. Although teachers here realize that their salaries are low, this fact does not seem to have much negative impact on them. There seems to be considerable faith that, given the present economic conditions, the state is doing the best that it can. The possibility of staffing cuts and benefits reductions seems to be the most significant factor impacting negatively upon teacher morale. One teacher felt that reductions in the teacher ranks without compensating reductions in central administration staffing tend to harm teacher morale. Another teacher expressed concern about the possible financial instability of the retirement system.

Generally, however, the morale of teachers as well as principals seems remarkably high. Most central administration staff members have a very positive and optimistic attitude. They have confidence in their programs and feel that overall the Cabell County Schools are providing an excellent educational experience for the students. They are enthusiastic about the reorganization and the building program, although one central administration director did express some concern about getting new curriculum ideas into the system since most new and renovated buildings likely will be of traditional architecture.

As for teachers, they do indeed appear to be the ones "in the trenches" bearing the brunt of daily school realities and changes. Our general impression, admittedly based on just a few days of interviews and site visits, was that the District's teachers are committed, able, and looking out for student interests. However, not surprisingly, we also observed some tired, tense teachers who answered our questions guardedly with long pauses and some nervous laughter.

All in all, the Cabell County Public School District appears to be well-operated, efficient, and effective. Professional staff have a good attitude, they are concerned about the educational welfare of the students, and they are confident that they are doing a good job of providing a valuable educational experience for the students. The curriculum is generally comprehensive and relevant for today's society. Some school buildings are old, but the newly funded building program should upgrade the facilities. The reorganization to a middle school structure has been well accepted. Contemporary discipline and drug abuse problems do not appear to be any more acute here than in similar school systems elsewhere; indeed, they may be less acute here. Of course, securing adequate funding is a continuing problem in the context of declining enrollment and a poor economic climate. In summary, the school system is, as one of us phrased it in the monthly principals' meeting, "doing a valiant job under very difficult conditions."

AEL's ROLE IN CABELL COUNTY SCHOOL CHANGE

Although AEL has functioned for over two decades, this case study is focusing only on AEL's involvement with Cabell County Public School District from early 1987 to May 1991. During this time, AEL has provided various types of assistance to the District through three of its programs--School Governance and Administration (SGA), Classroom Instruction (CI), and Information Services (IS). A fourth AEL program, the Community Liaison to Urban Education program, is now being initiated in Cabell County. However, it is not being conducted directly through the schools and was therefore not included in this case study.

AEL has provided substantial and consistent assistance to Cabell County School District since early 1987. AEL's approach has been to provide service, as needed, in several arenas and at several different levels in the school hierarchy. As with all school districts in AEL's service region, Cabell County has available AEL's information services, which its school personnel have used extensively. District schools receive the regular mailings of AEL's The Link and of other reports and publications, such as R and D Notes. Numerous professional staff receive these publications.

AEL's involvement with Cabell County is integrated with school operations. As such, AEL's involvement is reflected in the preceding discussion about the school system. In order to avoid unnecessary repetition, AEL's activities in Cabell School District, either completed or in process, are listed below in an annotated form, followed by any necessary elaboration and a description of the perceptions of people interviewed about AEL's involvement with the school system:

1. Organizing and conducting the "Taking the Pulse" comprehensive needs assessments described earlier. This included working with the planning group and participating in the conferences, which were conducted

simultaneously at 10 different school sites. Two of the 10 needs assessment conferences were conducted by AEL staff.

2. AEL staff analyzed the data and wrote the report of the community needs assessment process. Probably most importantly, the AEL report of the results recommended that a school-community structure be implemented. This was done.

3. Following this needs assessment, a Citizens Advisory Council with four subcommittees was formed, also upon AEL's recommendation. AEL provided a consultant service on request of the committees.

4. Conducting a community survey about support for the Winter 1990 bond issue. AEL assisted with or undertook many of the survey tasks.

5. Assisting in preparing the Comprehensive School Facilities Plan 1990 to comply with state law

6. Consulting with the school board and a management team in preparing district-wide mission, goals, and values statements. This activity included participation in public meetings with the Board of Education to assist with strategic planning.

7. Piloting and field testing the Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking (QUILT) developmental system. QUILT is a staff development program whose three-day introductory workshop has been completed. The field test is scheduled for 1991; three QUILT trainers have been trained and the field test will be conducted in four schools with approximately 57 teachers.

8. Assisting in preparing a proposal to the state for an assessment of the feasibility of year-round schooling in Cabell County. The state has funded the proposal and AEL will assist in conducting the assessment.

These activities are those that have been conducted "on-site," so to speak, in Cabell County. They represent extensive involvement of AEL focused on specific district issues and tasks. However, Cabell County educators have also participated in AEL activities provided for a wider audience. AEL offers training workshops and study groups, cosponsored with professional associations such as the West Virginia Association of School Administrators (WVASA) and the West Virginia Education Association (WVEA). Those events attended by Cabell County Public Schools staff include:

1. The "School Excellence" workshops, including "Effective Questioning" and "What a Difference a Goal Makes"
2. A study group on training needs for school board members. This was part of an extensive statewide study to assess the training needs for the West Virginia Boardsmanship Academy.
3. A select seminar providing technical assistance on the topic of governance

AEL information services and routine dissemination were mentioned earlier, and district school staff have availed themselves of these services. There have been numerous requests for information on specific topics. Responses have been made by the AEL Resource Center. In summary, Cabell County Schools has received a wide spectrum of services and assistance from AEL.

CABELL COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT PERCEPTIONS OF AEL

In a school system the size of Cabell County's, awareness of and knowledge about AEL varies considerably among the professional staff. We found that AEL was known at all levels of the educational staff hierarchy. For example, teachers involved with the QUILT program were very aware of AEL's influence in the school district. Principals were generally aware of AEL since they all receive AEL publications such as The Link. Those principals whose schools were directly involved in AEL activities were of course very knowledgeable about it. However, three principals (one each at the high school, middle school, and elementary school levels) said that they knew little of AEL, and one was not familiar with The Link. Coincidentally or not, these three principals have schools in the eastern part of the district.

Central staff personnel were generally well informed about AEL and its work in Cabell County, and several of these individuals work with AEL, some on a continuing basis. Central administrators generally perceived AEL to be helpful and highly professional in its direct assistance. The one school board member whom we interviewed commented that although he did not know a lot about AEL, he had found their assistance useful, especially in reference to the preparation of the district's mission statement.

The comments of a retired Cabell County School District assistant superintendent who has worked with AEL extensively over the years were consistently positive (see photo 8). He felt that surveys conducted by AEL, such as "Taking the Pulse," had a direct bearing on the public's acceptance of the bond issue. He also commented on AEL's strength in curriculum development and mentioned that he has high respect for AEL's program directors. He feels that AEL personnel have been very professional in their dealings with Cabell County educators. This person had also worked with AEL outside of Cabell County during membership on state committees where he also found AEL personnel to be highly professional and capable. He did comment that "sometimes there may have been too much emphasis [by AEL] on goal setting and mission statements--a tendency for too much talking and for studying things to death." However, he also mentioned that when this happens it may be caused more by school administrators than by AEL personnel.

Central administrators often commented that the district has a good working relationship with AEL. Their satisfaction level with AEL's work is clearly very high, and they commented on specific AEL activities. AEL predictions based on the bond issue survey were very accurate. AEL workshops conducted throughout the four-state region and attended by Cabell County District administrators were found to be very good and resulted in the development of school district projects. There have been consistent, prompt, and useful responses whenever assistance was requested from AEL. Central administrators generally seemed to feel comfortable working with AEL personnel.

Those staff members familiar with The Link perceived it as an effective communication and dissemination tool. In the past, this publication has apparently contained articles about the Cabell County Schools, and one individual commented that these articles had provided good publicity for the schools. Several of the principals interviewed felt that The Link is informative and useful. One principal commented that she would like to see more teachers reading it and using AEL's information services. Teachers interviewed varied considerably in their knowledge of The Link. Some were not familiar with it at all, others said they "had seen it," and one teacher commented that she receives the publication and has found useful information on specific topics of concern to her. One curriculum supervisor commented that she thought that most teachers would know little about AEL by name even though many have gone through AEL training sessions.

The extent to which teachers become involved with AEL activities seems to depend on two factors: 1) their own motivation to do so and 2) the involvement of their school's staff in AEL programs such as QUILT. With over 1,100 teacher in the school system, the level of teacher involvement is bound to vary greatly. It has already been mentioned that teachers involved with AEL programs are often unaware of AEL sponsorship of these programs. However, of the teachers interviewed, those participating in QUILT were clearly aware that this was an AEL program. Teacher comments about AEL workshops were consistently positive. One teacher commented that AEL workshops are well organized with useful content. AEL workshop instructors generally were rated high as to their instructional capabilities.

Comments about AEL's involvement in Cabell County were also obtained from individuals outside the school system. The Planning Services Director of the Regional Education Services Area (RESA) based in Huntington was familiar with AEL activities. He had attended an AEL institute and found it to be well done with a lot of hands-on activities. He said that AEL publications regularly come to the RESA.

We referred earlier to interviews that were conducted with two faculty members of Marshall University's College of Education. Neither person was very familiar with AEL, although one indicated that some college faculty had attended AEL workshops. Both faculty members indicated that the Cabell County Schools have a good working relationship with the College of Education, and, to the best of their knowledge, AEL and Cabell County Schools also have a good relationship.

All in all, familiarity with AEL's activities in the Cabell County School District seems pretty evenly spread throughout the county. It is very acute among the central office staff. Among principals and teachers, knowledge of AEL depends on the extent of their schools' involvement with AEL activities, even though all schools receive copies of The Link and of other AEL publications. One characteristic was noted, especially among principals: awareness of AEL seemed to be proportional to the school's proximity to Huntington; the farther from Huntington, the less the awareness.

Regardless of the extent of familiarity with AEL, those who knew about AEL's activities, services, and publications consistently had positive perceptions of them.

CONCLUSION: CABELL COUNTY SCHOOLS IN 1991

We generally found Cabell County to be an attractive, seemingly prosperous place with knowledgeable and capable educators and citizens, good roads, and a clean city and towns. We say this not to patronize the county but to point out the discrepancy between some of our expectations and our actual field findings. In preparing to go to Cabell County we tried to read widely on West Virginia's history, economy, society, and educational system. Both general folklore and the compilations of statistics that we consulted told us, explicitly or implicitly, that West Virginia remains today a "backward," "hillbilly," "Appalachian" state with depressed industries, declining populations, low salaries, etc.

To be sure, West Virginia has economic problems that are reflected in conditions such as declining school enrollments and low teacher salaries. However, such conditions are always a matter of degree. The general morale and spirit was upbeat during our visit, and people genuinely gave the impression that Cabell County is a good place to live.

We found the mood in the Cabell County schools to be generally positive. This is, of course, in part due to the recent passing of the bond issue and the anticipated improvements that will be made by the district's extensive building program. Apart from this building program though, the administrators and teachers display enthusiasm and confidence that they are providing an effective educational program for the children of Cabell County.

Indeed, this appears to be the case. The curriculum of the Cabell County Public School District is relevant to today's society and is designed to address students' many and varied needs. Teachers and administrators alike are hard-working and focused on their jobs. The district's central administration staff is well organized and efficient.

The Cabell County Schools are very service oriented, which is reflected in the need for a rather large central administration staff and in the district's willingness to use services from external sources. This service orientation has undoubtedly made the district highly receptive to AEL's services. These services have been useful, and it is clear that they are sought by school personnel. AEL services are designed to meet a need or to provide impetus for educational improvement. AEL services apply at multiple levels of the educational hierarchy. Services from AEL typically are applied in a cooperative manner. That is, the tasks are done collaboratively between AEL staff and district personnel rather than AEL independently completing the tasks. AEL has responded effectively and in a timely manner to the requests of Cabell County Schools. This was evidenced not only in the comments of those interviewed but also in the results of specific service projects.

Nevertheless, the Cabell County Public School District faces major challenges in the decade of the 1990s. The building program will require continuous and detailed attention, and it will have its share of snags. Adjustments will need to be made by students, parents, teachers, and administrators; and some of these adjustments will be viewed as undesirable. There will be some tension as attendance areas are reorganized. There may be open opposition to some of the proposed changes, although it is not likely there will be much opposition from within the professional education community.

Declining enrollments and "belt-tightening" policies, along with new state regulations, will cause some conflict in undertaking the necessary tasks. Solutions to problems will need to be developed and implemented within such constraints. Again, AEL can, and undoubtedly will, continue to provide valuable service in solving problems and in implementing positive educational change. In this way, AEL can remain a valuable resource and partner in providing quality education for the students of Cabell County.

We would like to thank the students, teachers, principals, staff, and administrators of Cabell County School District for their hospitality, candor, and cooperation. We would especially like to thank Dr. Dallas Blankenship, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction & Support Programs, for arranging our visit and for answering our many questions.

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West Virginia agrees to bar segregation of spec.-ed. students. (1991, May 29). Education Week, p. 2.

West Virginia budget blueprint may be vetoed. (1987, May 27). Education Week, p. 11.

West Virginia delays scheduled aid payments to local boards. (1986, December 17). Education Week, p. 11.

West Virginia district sues state over funding delays. (1988, February 24). Education Week, p. 14.

West Virginia: Governor vetoes omnibus school bill. (1986, April 30). Education Week, pp. 8, 15.

West Virginia high court overturns statewide strike injunction. (1990, November 21). Education Week, p. 2.

West Virginia: Moore seeks to raise salaries for teachers. (1987, January 28). Education Week, p. 13.

West Virginia, Oregon chiefs announce their resignations. (1989, January 11). Education Week, p. 14.

West Virginia supreme court upholds law linking drivers' licenses with attendance. (1990, December 12). Education Week, p. 29.

West Virginia votes to keep independent state board, superintendent. (1989, September 20). Education Week, p. 7.

W.Va. court finds pay-raise veto unconstitutional. (1985, September 4). Education Week, p. 3.

W. Va. tightens its spec.-ed. criteria. (1988, March 2). Education Week, p. 13.

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Donna Adams
Dallas Blankenship
Sue Bowen
Jerry Brewster
Mel Cummings
Sally Piepenbrink
Sandie Saunders

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS

Mary Campbell
Edna Congleton
Irene Faller
Richard Fillmore
John Flowers
David Groves
Rosalie Hodges
Nellie Hooser
Jerry Hurley
Butch Kasey
Pam Krouse
Larry Lambert
Mike O'Dell
Beverly Ours
Ralph Rood
Albert Tenney

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY FACULTY

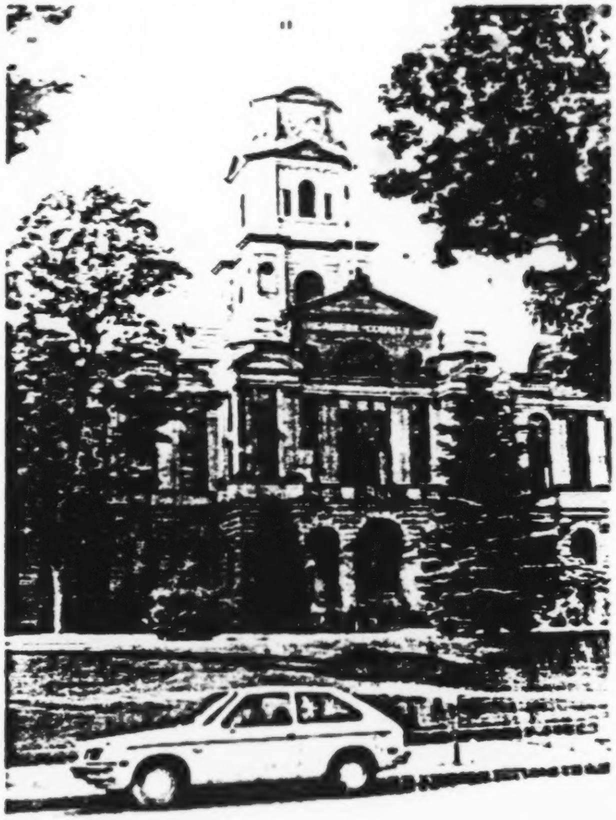
Roscoe Hale
Stan Maynard

JOURNALIST

Steve Ambrose

IMAGES OF CABELL COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

1. Huntington, WV, seen from the Ohio side of the Ohio River



3. The Civic Center, downtown Huntingtor

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2. Cabell County Building, downtown Huntington

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4. Central administration building, Cabell County Schools, Huntington

5. Sally Piepenbrink, Sue Bowen, and Donna Adams, central administrators

7. Central administration scene

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6. Bonnie Watkins, secretary, central administration

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8. Bob Griffis former district Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum

10.The gymnasium of Barboursville Middle School, constructed c. 1890 the school's main building was constructed in 1850 and is the state's oldest public school building still in use.

BARBOURSVILLE

9. Entering Barboursville, WV

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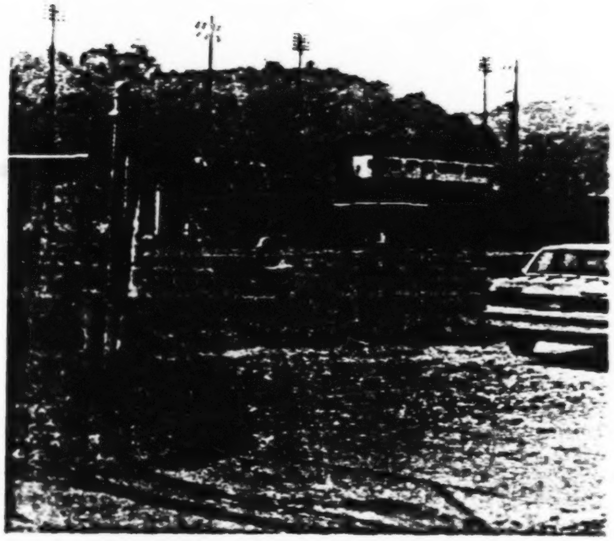
11. John D. Flowers, Principal, Barboursville High School

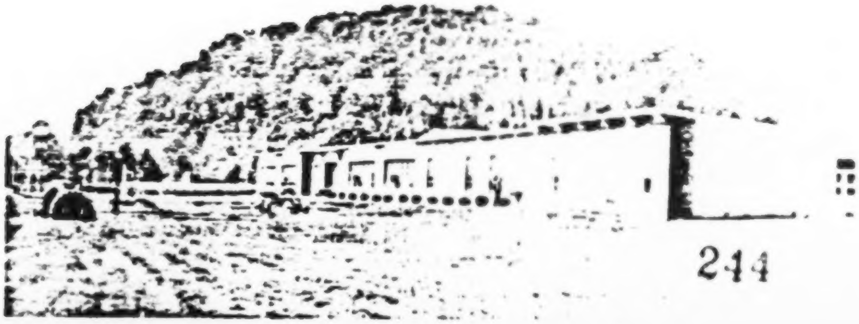
12. Parking lot, Barboursville High School (built in 1924)



13. Football stadium, Barboursville High School

CULLODE
SCHOO

14. Mike O'Dell, Principal, Culloden Elementary School (built in 1933), Culloden, WV



15. Martha Elementary School (built in 1958), Barboursville, WV

16. Jerry L. Hurley, Principal, Martha Elementary School

17. Cabell County Vocational-Technical Center (built in 1981)

18. Parking lot side of Beverly Hills Middle School (built in 1954)

19. Entering Milton, WV

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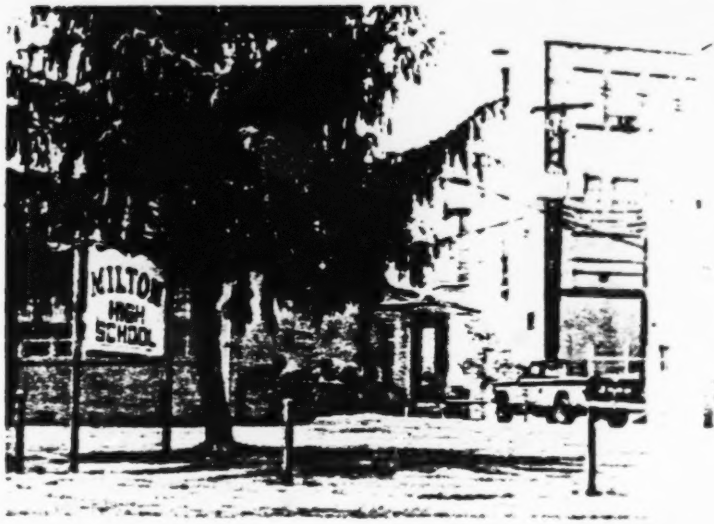
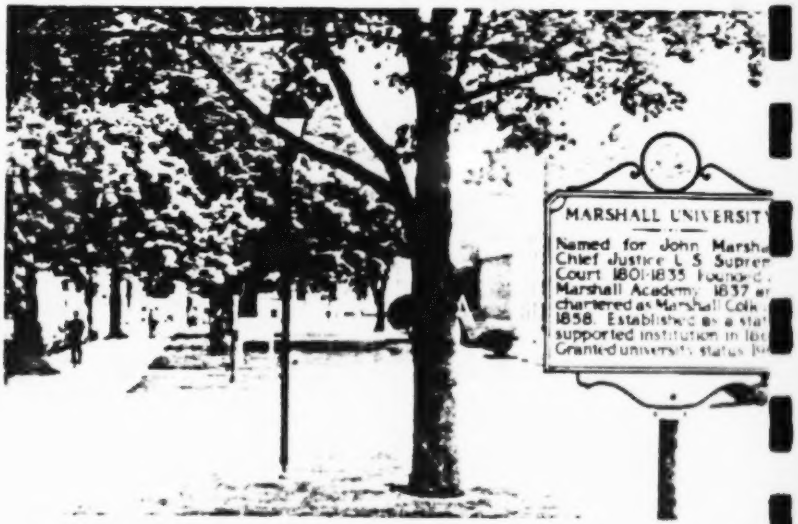
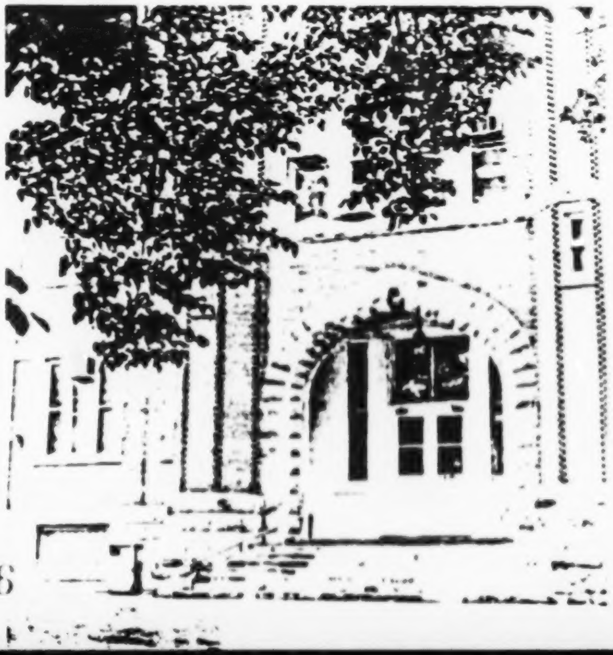

MILTON
HIGH
SCHOOL

20. Milton High School: the Grant Building to the right was formerly the junior high school (built in 1926); the building to the left is the main high school (built in 1956)

21. Richard B. Fillmore, Principal, Milton High School


MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

22. Marshall University, Huntington



23. Old Main administration building, Marshall University

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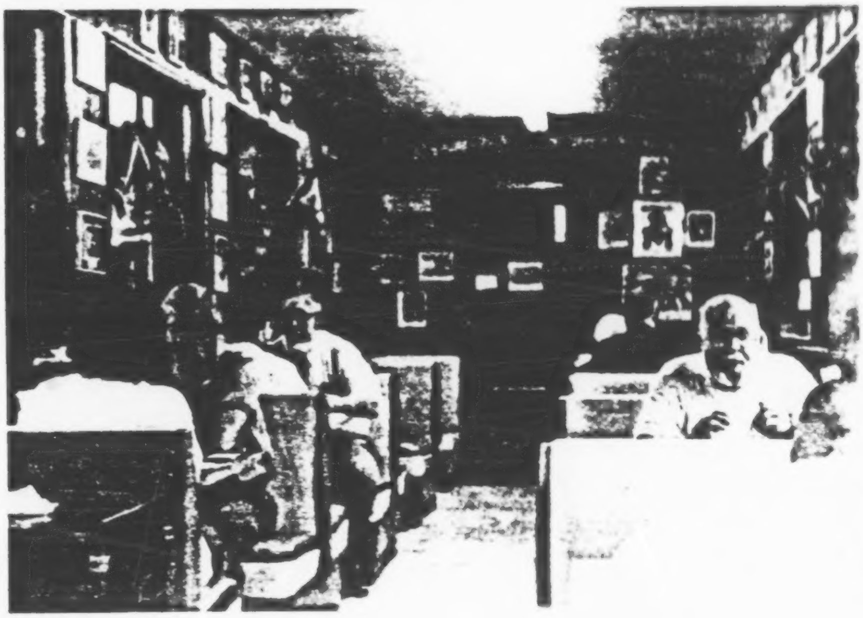
24. Jenkins Hall, housing the College of Education, Marshall University



25. "Wiggin's Restaurant," adjacent to Marshall University on Hal Greer Boulevard

26. Dr. Bill Wiersma, A.E.L. external evaluator and case study team member

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